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SEASHORE AND PRAIRIE.

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BY

MARY P. THACHER.

That which some would call idleness, I will call the sweetest part of my life, and that is, my thinking.

OWEN FELTHAM.

BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
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TO

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW,

WHOSE SONGS HAVE CHEERED SO MANY TRAVELLERS
BY THE WAYSIDE,

This little Volume

IS, BY PERMISSION,

GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

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SEASHORE AND PRAIRIE.

OLD YORK.

OCCASIONALLY a traveller alights from the cars at Portsmouth, N. H., formerly known as "Strawberry Bank," and instead of being swept away by the fashionable current which sets to the Isles of Shoals, clambers into the crowded York stage-coach. In that rheumatic vehicle he is jolted over a long, dusty, and hilly road; but glimpses of York River, with its luxuriant groves and verdant slopes, refresh the eye, and Agamenticus lifts his three majestic heads above the horizon in welcome. On which of those blue peaks St. Aspinquid, the Indian apostle, lies

buried, tradition saith not. But the legend says that after the saint was converted to Christianity he spent fifty years in preaching to the native tribes "from the Atlantic to the California seas," and that when he rested from his labors the Indians sacrificed over six thousand wild animals to his departed spirit.

York is one of the oldest of the old seaport towns which summer travel has invaded and brought into notice, for it disputes with St. Augustine the honor of having been the first city in America. When Charles the First granted a portion of the Province of Maine to Ferdinando Gorges, the territory now known as York became the seat of government, and was called the city of Gorgeana. But the authority of Gorges was of short duration; a few weeks after his royal master was beheaded the boasted city charter was revoked, and Massachusetts assumed control of the colony. "Then," complains a local orator, "they gave us the short, snappish

name of York by which we are to this day known, and the liquid, euphonious name of Gorgeana, after an existence of ten short years, was forever wiped out." The present condition of York is thus bewailed by one of her townsmen: "He (Gorges) selected this place, and was so pleased with the locality as to bestow upon us the honor of being denizens of *the first European city on the American continent.* Of this we should be and are proud, although clothed now in a garb of the lowest humility. We were *sold out* to a rival company, as it were, for thirty pieces of silver, and crucified on the altar of the ambition of the Massachusetts Bay Company; and after enjoying our city charter for a brief period, became a town of much note, this place being the seat of justice for the whole province of Maine for a long period. But we commenced to dwindle by degrees, until now we are comparatively isolated from the rest of mankind. . . . . To such an extent

have we fallen in our own and the estimation of other neighboring places, that we hardly have a heart to relate our sorrowful condition."

The only traces now existing of the embryo city are a few narrow parallel streets near the mouth of the river, similar to the little lanes which lead down to the old wharves in Newport, R. I. Two garrison-houses are still standing, — perhaps the veritable structures which held out against the Indians when the town was destroyed in 1692. Scattered about the town are many venerable homesteads occupied by descendants of the old royalists, who jealously guard the traditions of the past. Yet York was not behindhand in patriotism, for two years before Thomas Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence the people of York drew up a similar document. This was sent to Boston, and the oldest inhabitant cherishes the fixed belief that Mr. Jefferson borrowed some of his famous sentences, such as "taxation with-

out representation," from the York resolutions. The old York meeting-house is sacred to the memory of the eccentric Father Moody. There he administered his celebrated rebuke to his tardy parishioner, a stately Englishman, who walked up the broad aisle in prayer-time. "And, O good Lord," prayed the worthy parson, "among thy other kind dispensations, cure thy servant who has just entered thy house of that ungodly strut."

The fearless old preacher spared neither friend nor foe, and even the ladies of the parish did not escape. "One day," says the record, "a lady came sweeping into church in a new hooped dress. 'Here she comes,' cried Father Moody, 'top and top-gallant, rigged most beautifully and sailing most majestically. But she has a leak that will sink her to hell.'"

Perhaps no event ever more effectually aroused the parson's fiery indignation than the behavior of some of his flock toward

the Indians. The Harmon brothers were seafaring men, and in their absence from home their families suffered severely from Indian cruelties, and they vowed revenge. Peace had just been declared between the hostile races after a long war of extermination, when the people of York, as a proof of good-will, invited the Indians to a banquet. The savages hesitated; but the assurances of good faith were so earnest and solemn that they finally yielded. The carousal was held in a small house near the river. The Indians were cautious and distrustful at first, but a cordial reception and abundant supplies of liquor threw them off their guard. Suddenly the house was surrounded by armed men, and the poor creatures were massacred without mercy. The Harmons were the instigators of this piece of treachery.

The next Sunday Father Moody looked sternly down upon his breathless congregation, and slowly repeated the text, "I have

seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." A fiery denunciation of the crime followed, ending with the prediction that at no distant day the Harmon family, which was then large and flourishing, would become extinct. The prophecy was fulfilled. The family continued to live in York, but it slowly dwindled away till no one was left to transmit the fated name.

Father Moody's grave lies opposite the church, among mossy marbles which are broken and crumbling to decay. His son, "Handkerchief Moody," whose sad life suggested Hawthorne's story, *The Minister's Black Veil*, is buried in the neighboring parish of Scotland. This portion of York was settled by Scottish royalists whom Cromwell had taken prisoners in battle and banished to America. There are many dark and mysterious versions of the tragedy that shadowed

Joseph Moody's life. When a young man this unfortunate parson accidentally shot an intimate friend with whom he was hunting, and, it is commonly supposed, was so overcome with grief and remorse that he thenceforth veiled his face from mortal sight. The death of his friend inspired the local muse, and the poet sung, —

> "O, lamentable, lamentable!
> What has become of Ebenezer Preble?"

It is stated, however, on good authority, that Joseph Moody was at first a very popular young lawyer, and was elected to various high offices by his admiring townsmen. This state of affairs did not please Father Moody, who commanded his son to renounce the world, and don the ministerial robes. Joseph obeyed; but becoming convinced, after a few years, that he was not fitted for the work, and that he had committed a great sin in undertaking to preach, he abandoned his labors and took the black veil. The grave of Handker-

chief Moody is in a little enclosure shaded by old trees, and the dark headstone is overgrown with moss. "An excellent instance of knowledge, learning, ingenuity, piety, and usefulness," says the epitaph, and "uncommonly qualified and spirited to do good." The date of the decease is followed by these lines: —

"Altho' this stone may crumble into dust,
Yet Joseph Moody's name continue must."

Not far from this, on Cider Hill, a decrepit apple-tree is pointed out which was brought in a tub from England two and a half centuries ago. It is popularly believed that this aged tree still bears fruit, though it is, to all appearance, little more than a decayed and picturesque trunk.

York boasts of two bathing beaches, and the beautiful "Long Sands," two miles from the village, deserve to be better known. From the great caravansary which stands midway on the Sands strange figures emerge at all hours of the day, and after a plunge in

the icy surf paddle back to their rooms in dripping garments and rubbers full of water, leaving behind them little briny streams in the halls and on the stairs. A few small cottages on the beach are occupied in turn, during the summer months, by poor families from inland towns, who thus get a breath of life-giving air at little expense. Boon Island Light, the scene of so many terrible shipwrecks, rises from the ocean in front, and at dusk twinkles amid the waste of waters like the early evening star. Off at the right lie the Isles of Shoals, and the brilliant revolving light on White Island calls up pleasant memories of the small maiden who once "lit the lamps in the lighthouse tower."

On the left a long neck of land runs out into the sea, and terminates in Cape Neddock, a corruption of Haddock. Separated at high tide from this point by a deep channel is a rocky headland called the Nubble, crowned by two weather-beaten huts which

shelter the sportsmen who go there in the autumn to shoot wild ducks. There the supposed discoverer of Agamenticus, Captain Gosnold, is said to have landed in 1602. No stunted tree or shrub takes root upon the Nubble, but richly tinted wild-flowers bloom in the clefts of the rocks, and delicate vines cling to the rough bowlders, the playthings of the winter storms.

York is not yet a fashionable retreat, for fashion cannot brook the stage-ride, and the favored few who have discovered this quiet haven pray that the day of railroads may be far distant. The inhabitants cling lovingly to the past.

"To live forgotten and die forlorn" is not agreeable, yet they accept the present with mournful resignation. When summer brings in her train a few dozen transient guests, the villagers feel a gleam of hope. Who knows what may yet be in store for the old town, with its green farms and hillsides, and the

picturesque river which artists love to sketch? But with the frosts of autumn the old apathy creeps over the people, and they turn for comfort to the ancient splendor, the dreams of their ancestors. The doomed city of Gorgeana springs from oblivion, and in the light of other days they bask content.

WATER-LILIES IN NEWPORT.

WE had spent the summer mornings lazily swinging in hammocks, and idly watching the stray eddies of fashion which swept through our quiet street. Gayly dressed maidens tripped lightly by; stately carriages, attended by scornful footmen in livery, and whose occupants wore upon their faces an expression of mournful resignation, slowly rumbled along; and mad express-wagons rattled over the stones. But these had alike lost their charm.

Then at sunset we had sailed among the islands in the bay, startling the white-winged sea-gulls from their rocky perches, and nearly upsetting our boat in vain attempts to grasp

some of the tantalizing sea-anemones which opened and shut their pink blossoms in the clear water. And once we carelessly ran down a graceful little craft, the "Red Bird," thereby cruelly wrecking both the small sloop and the hopes of its boyish captain. What more had Newport to offer us? Life was becoming monotonous, and we pined for an adventure.

We had driven one day by a roadside pond, white with lilies. The sight called up memories of a certain cool dark meadow in Northern Maine, surrounded by fir-clad hills, where every summer the white lilies opened their fragrant buds, and where their lovers gathered them by hundreds. Those lilies belonged to the dreams of youth; and these were as unattainable. At least the careful Professor said they were; and the youth who usually escorted us on our expeditions, whose golden locks and blond mustache belied his Italian name, said, "No, I can't go out in that

leaky punt. No, you'll have to do without lilies this time. Isn't it enough to look at them?"

But it wasn't enough. Giovanni's remarks had rankled in our minds ever since. Those lilies haunted us by day and by night. And when, one sunny morning, the maiden we called Jo defiantly whispered, "Let's have those lilies, or die!" we hailed the thought as an inspiration.

The Professor, who, having no sons or daughters, made all childhood and youth his own, thus keeping his heart forever young, usually kept a watchful eye upon us. But he had fortunately betaken himself to a distant city, to attend a gathering of learned men, and had left us in Giovanni's charge. To be sure, there was one other gentleman in our quiet family that summer, and in the unreal romantic atmosphere in which Newporters live, move, and have their being, his existence created no surprise. He had lived in many

climes, that polite, deferential foreigner, and the stories with which he entertained us sounded like Arabian Night's Tales. He conversed fluently in Latin, Spanish, Arabic, anything. He had been an Arabian Bey, and he had worn the gown and beads of a Dominican friar. When evening came he chanted the muezzin's call to prayer. He described the novel way by which he cured certain beautiful Arabian damsels of wearing rings in their noses. He introduced us to Sheiks and Grand Viziers, and gave us vivid pictures of life on a camel's back. Then he arrayed us in sheets and tablecloths, that we might know how Damascus women looked upon the street, and made us sigh for Damascus ice-cream, flavored with rose-water.

But agreeable foreigners are apt to be looked upon with suspicion. So it was to Giovanni that the shrewd Professor whispered, as he took his departure, "Don't let the girls drown themselves in that lily-pond!"

But on that eventful morning even Giovanni had mysteriously disappeared, and we hastily ordered two carriages, and started for the forbidden pond. Our party consisted of a pleasant German lady with her two children, the three pretty maidens with their mamma, and myself. All the while we fondly believed that Giovanni was engaged in his favorite pursuit of fishing for sharks. But we declared that we would drown the youth under the lily-pads, should we find that, instead of going fishing, he had divined our purpose and meant to spoil our fun. Miss Jo shook her pretty head defiantly as we uttered these deadly threats, and shook the reins also; while her mamma, who, by the way, was sorely afflicted with a rose cold, nervously clasped her camphor-bottle with both hands, and imploringly said, "Don't tip us over!"

"Don't be a goose, mamma," soothingly replied Miss Bella.

We dashed through the avenue, the ob-

served of all observers, and out on the shore road, where we could see the waves glisten and dash in little white cascades over the rocks. Soon we passed some wild rose-bushes laden with fragrant blossoms.

"Mamma, I want some," said Bella.

"Never!" cried her mother. "One rose in the house would drive me wild."

At this, we resolutely shut our eyes and drove on.

"Hallo!" shouted a voice from the carriage in the rear. It came from the depths of Miss Julia's flapping straw hat. "Have you any scissors? I want some roses."

"Can't have any," returned Jo; "mamma says so."

"But I *must*."

"Daughter," cried the maternal voice, "then I shall have a fit of sickness."

With a shout of defiance Miss Julia sprang from the buggy, and plucked the roses with her own delicate fingers. Meantime her

mamma grasped the camphor-bottle more tightly, and we kept on. At length we came in sight of the pond, and strained our eyes for a glimpse of the treacherous Giovanni. He was not there, unless he had transformed himself, by the aid of the water kelpie, into the large black dog which sat upon the brink, as if to save us from a watery grave. Then arose upon the soft summer air the mingling of many voices.

"Girls, I cannot be left with the horses," declared anxious mamma.

"Don't leave us all alone," cried the good-natured German lady.

But the spirit of adventure had taken possession of young and old, and all except the two forlorn matrons clambered through or climbed over the fence by the roadside. After long hunting and many imprecations upon the meddlesome Giovanni, the small, flat-bottomed, leaky punt was discovered hidden in the bushes at the wrong end of the pond,

where it would be impossible to launch it. But with a shout of triumph the boat was captured by the two most enterprising damsels, and carried in their aching arms around the pond, through the tall grass and weeds, amid screams of fright lest imaginary reptiles should attack their tender feet. Meantime the two youngsters, like a pair of noisy ducks kept out of their native element, clamored to wade into the pond, and were shouted at, scolded, and commanded to keep out of the water. Notwithstanding which, they persisted in dancing down to the water's edge, and wetting their feet in trying to reach deceptive lilies. The boat was finally pushed into the mud, and Jo seated herself in the bottom, and with two short paddles painfully propelled herself forward. The children screamed, and a confused murmur of alarm came from the roadside. The anxious sisters left upon the bank cried, "You 'll be drowned!" "You never can do it!" "Sit quietly!" "Sit in

the middle!" "Get out and let me try it!" till the incensed voyager requested them in no mild terms to hold their peace, and the *enfant terrible* innocently remarked, "If I were you, I would n't be cross to my sisters."

Then Bella and I removed our shoes and stockings and ventured into the water. But, as it appeared afterward, the malicious Giovanni had taken pains to gather all the lilies near the shore, and we only sunk hopelessly deeper and deeper into the slimy ooze. At this stage, piercing cries for help came from the road. "The horses are crazy! They are jumping out of their harness! O, what, what shall we do?"

We who were fixed fast among the lily-pads turned our heads, and saw the two matrons dancing wildly about in the dust, while the two horses meekly stood still and gazed at them in astonishment. Presently a carriage approached, and the dignified Jehu condescended to alight, to soothe the per-

turbed minds of the ladies and examine the harness, which probably one or two hungry flies had disarranged.

Soon afterward Jo landed, her garments dripping with water, and laden with fragrant spoils. And then her sister Julia entered the fleet boat, and kneeling in the bottom pushed off for the opposite shore. We climbed into the carriages and waited. The hour of noon approached; the horses were impatient to be off; but still the persistent Julia labored on, while the water slowly trickled into the boat.

"She 'll be drowned!" shrieked the mother. "My eldest born! Won't she?" The latter remark was addressed to a countryman who was driving by, and who stopped at sight of her distress.

"Why, marm, she would n't be there if she was n't well used to that pond."

"No, no, she was never there before."

"Wal, I guess nobody was ever drownded there," replied the man. And as he drove

away, his tall son added soothingly, "The water is n't much over my head."

But at last the young woman ended her dangerous voyage, threw us exultingly a skirt full of lilies, and then wandered up and down the road, through the dusty grass, in search of her shoes.

At length we were all safely embarked for home. By this time the distressed mamma's nerves had naturally been wrought up to a high pitch, and she became possessed with the idea that Jo did not know how to drive, and that we had escaped Scylla only to fall on Charybdis.

"Mamma, never, as long as I live, will I take you to drive again," declared the annoyed Jo. But at every such reproof her mamma would say in a surprised tone and with perfect seriousness, "Why, I am not timid, child! Not in the least."

Meanwhile our small irrepressible declared that America was a horrid country; she

wished she had never seen it; she hated it; why did n't her mamma stay in Germany? And Bella declared that children were the ruthless destroyers of all earthly happiness.

Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that we reached home in safety, having escaped all perils by sea and land, and decorated the dinner-table from one end to the other with our fair trophies. The Professor, who had written an essay on water-lilies, in which he called them cups of snow, and other pretty names, was not there to see our triumph. But our foreign friend poetically remarked, that the lily took the same place among flowers that the swan held among birds.

We found that Giovanni had indeed suspected our plans, and done his best to defeat them. But he was discovered, and his long walk under the burning sun had given him a terrible headache.

"Of what avail is it, O Giovanni," we cried, "to thwart a woman?"

But Giovanni only solemnly replied, "If you had been drowned, what would the Professor have done to me?"

All this happened long ago. The pretty maidens have sought other fields to conquer; Giovanni is roaming with brush and easel under the sunny skies of Italy; and our foreign friend has vanished as suddenly and mysteriously as he appeared. The Professor still pores over his books, still writes essays, and bestows his rare smiles upon his youthful friends. More noteworthy events have happened and been forgotten; but the fragrance of those Newport water-lilies yet lingers in my memory.

THE KNOX HOUSE.

THE command, "Remove not the ancient landmarks," is held in light esteem in our day and generation. The recent destruction of General Knox's old home, in Maine, is perhaps not generally known, though the long indifference with which the building had been regarded foretold its slow but sure decay.

The Knox House stood on the banks of the St. George's River, in Thomaston, near the site of an old fort erected in colonial times, for defence against the French and Indians. In the rear of the mansion there were several neat buildings, — the stables, the servants' lodgings, and the cook-house. "Beautifully

at the water's edge sat this sumptuous villa," writes the old historian of the town, "as it first caught the eye and struck the lofty mind of Mrs. Knox." A French nobleman who was a guest here describes the mansion as "a handsome, though not magnificent structure." But the enthusiastic chronicler hastens to explain that the Duke brought his ideas of magnificence from degenerate and luxurious France.

General Knox took up his abode here in 1795, and the family made the journey from Philadelphia to Thomaston in a sloop. "Montpelier," as Mrs. Knox called her new home in the wilderness, excited the wonder and admiration of the village. The General owned a vast tract of land in this vicinity, which he wished to settle with a tenantry, after the English fashion. To encourage the speedy settlement of the country, he interested himself in various kinds of business. He built ships and saw-mills, and engaged in brick-

making and lime-burning; he imported game from Massachusetts, and new breeds of cattle and sheep from England. His hospitality was unbounded, and his house was thronged with guests, many of whom were distinguished foreigners. Wonderful stories are told of the grand style of living in vogue at the mansion. It is said that twenty sheep were often consumed in a week, and that oxen were roasted whole before the immense fireplaces; that the General kept twenty saddle-horses in his stable; and that he had a road cut for a pleasure-party to a neighboring mountain, still a favorite place for picnics, at the expense of five hundred dollars, — a great sum in those days. It is even stated that he extended his hospitality so far as to invite the whole tribe of Penobscot Indians to make him a visit; and that when these strange visitors had feasted for weeks on the General's bounty, he remarked, "Now we have had a good time, and you 'd better go home." How much

of all this is true, and how much mere tradition, it is now impossible to determine. But it is certain that the General was very extravagant; and no doubt the family lived in a style which, in those days, seemed little short of princely. Mrs. Knox was a haughty Englishwoman, and had little intercourse with the townspeople, who always called her Lady Knox. She entertained her aristocratic friends, and visited them in turn, spending the winters in Boston, where she was fond of risking large sums of money at the card-table. She was small in person, but had so stately an air that people were apt to think her very tall. Many anecdotes are told in illustration of Lady Knox's pride. One day, says tradition, her carriage, the only one in the village, broke down, and it was necessary to dismount while some temporary repairs were made. A kind-hearted woman, who lived near the scene of the accident, invited Lady Knox to take refuge in her house; but she preferred to

stand in the muddy street. Near the mansion was an ancient burial-ground, and the grave-stones were a constant eyesore to the pleasure-loving lady. According to the village historian, quoted above, "they interrupted her gayety by the unwelcome thoughts of death"; but her husband would not consent to have them removed. After his death the offending stones were thrown down. Another version has it that the deed was done in the General's absence from home, and that when he returned, in his vexation "he tore his hair with both his hands."

The General was personally very popular, but many of his enterprises failed, and little by little his land slipped from his grasp. His death was caused by swallowing a chicken-bone. His proud lady lived to see the fickleness of fortune, and then was laid by her husband's side.

Hawthorne visited "Montpelier" in 1837, and pronounced it a "ruinous old mansion,

with some grandeur of architecture." It was then occupied by the youngest daughter of General Knox, a very agreeable and amiable woman. But family pride forbade her to sell an inch of land, and she contrived to live and keep up a certain appearance of style on her small income of six hundred a year. The daughters of Lady Knox were not so exclusive as their mother, and sometimes invited a neighbor in to spend the day. On such occasions, great baskets of old letters were produced, after dinner, for the entertainment of the guest. Many of these letters bore the signatures of Washington, Lafayette, and other celebrities, and one can imagine the glow of pride with which they were unfolded. There is something pathetic in the picture,—that little group of women in the desolate old mansion, trying to forget the present in the faded glories of the past.

In 1854 the last child of Knox died, and the heirs sold the house and furniture at auction.

The latter was bought by people of the town, who exhibit with pride the old-fashioned, well-worn sideboards, the handsome plate and dainty wineglasses, that once belonged to Lady Knox. Even the remains of the honored dead were not suffered to rest in the family vault, but were transported, without any ceremony, to the village churchyard. These proceedings caused not a little indignation among the townspeople.

In 1860 "Montpelier" was occupied by the families of ship-builders, and was fast crumbling into ruins. All but two of the outbuildings — the brick stable and the farm-house — had been removed. The woodbine, which clung to the walls as if trying to hide the ravages of time, only added to the general appearance of desolation. No traces remained of the piazzas and balconies which formerly surrounded the mansion, and the American eagle which once guarded the entrance to the spacious grounds had folded his carved wings and fallen from

his perch. The view from the flat roof was perhaps as beautiful as when Lady Knox stood there to survey her broad domains, and watch the course of the river past its wild banks. But thrifty villages had sprung up where the General intended to have forests and parks. The very entrance to the grounds was known as Knox Street, and was lined with rows of handsome houses. The front yard, which sloped to the water, had been transformed from a smooth lawn to a ship-yard, and was filled with piles of lumber and the noise of busy workmen. A few trees were left standing before the old house, to toss their great branches in mute protest at the desecration of what should be sacred ground. A long flight of rickety steps led up to the front of the mansion, but the huge brass knocker which was wont to announce the stranger, and which bore the General's peculiar signature, "HKnox," had fallen a prey to curiosity-hunters.

A few years later the mansion was aban-

doned by its tenants. The large oval reception-room, where Louis Philippe, Talleyrand, and other distinguished guests had been welcomed, was used for a carpenter's shop. The wall-paper originally bore some faint resemblance to tapestry, but many of the antique figures had been torn down, or mutilated, by the ruthless hands of visitors. An air of sadness pervaded the rooms where once thronged brilliant assemblies. Up and down the long, wide staircases trooped shadows of the past. It was like "some banquet-hall deserted." Strangers scolded and mourned in turn over this neglect. People acknowledged that it was a disgrace to the town, and then forgot all about it. At one time an effort was made to obtain, by subscription, the necessary funds with which to restore the noble old ruin, and it was proposed to keep it in repair by charging an admission-fee to the numerous strangers who visited it every summer. But the people, however disposed in theory to reverence past

greatness, were bound up in the present, and the project failed.

About three years ago the tottering structure, stately even in its decay, was pulled down, to make way for the Knox and Lincoln Railroad, and the farm-house was converted into a station-house. Thus the shrill whistle of the engine has drowned the voices of the past, and the busy tide of American life has swept away every vestige of this ancient landmark, the home of Washington's friend.

A MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE.

A LEGEND OF CAMDEN.

THE coast of Maine has a peculiar charm for strangers during the hot months, not only for the infinite variety of scenery it affords, that marvellous combination of sea and forest, of mountain lakes and green meadows, but because

> "There 's iron in our Northern winds,
> Our pines are trees of healing."

The traveller who enters the waters of Penobscot Bay for the first time sees with a thrill of surprise the range of mountains which skirt the shore. Rising grandly from the sea in robes of soft blue haze, their irregular outlines sharply defined against the bluer sky,

the Camden Hills, as they are popularly called, add not a little to the attractions of that locality. By the time the traveller comes in sight of Rockport, that picturesque little village encircled by hills, where the houses are perched high up on the ragged cliffs like eagles' eyries, he longs for a nearer view. And if he be one of the rare persons in these hurried lives of ours who can stop to breathe without being closely pursued by a conscientious fit of remorse, he will determine to become better acquainted with the wild beauties of this region.

There is Ragged Mountain, famous for blueberries, and for sending small boys home to their distraught mammas in the sad plight of Phœbe, the blackberry-girl, minus berries, and with garments torn to shreds.

There is Mt. Pleasant, with its long slope and its short slope, and its magnificent range of vision; the same mountain to which General Knox, as it is currently reported and

believed, caused a carriage road to be cut from Thomaston solely for the accommodation of a pleasure-party, at great expense to his private purse.

And there is Mt. Megunticook, wilder and more majestic than either of the three or their attendant hills, at whose base lies a beautiful lake. Between the lake and the mountain runs the "turnpike," a narrow road just wide enough for one carriage, and bordered on both sides by huge rocks that have tumbled from the crags above. From this road the mountain rises almost perpendicularly, and its bare, jagged heights are terrible in their grandeur.

Megunticook, the peculiar name by which Camden was originally known, is said to signify "great swells of the sea." The turnpike is a great favorite for pleasure-seekers. Picnics without number are held in its luxuriant groves of maple and birch, through which a mountain brook rushes and tumbles. Boating-

parties make the echoes ring with their merry songs as they lazily glide over the tranquil lake. Clam-bakes desecrate the pretty little islands that are scattered over the pond; and even a mock Woman's Rights Convention was held one summer under the very shadow of the mountain. The speakers, selecting a great block of granite for the rostrum, appealed to Nature, the mother of us all, for sympathy in their well-known wrongs. And if the lake might have been detected in an occasional ripple of laughter, the everlasting rocks, more generous than man, echoed the shrill applause.

The "Lake House" on the shore, an unpretending structure in all but name, furnishes lemonade to the thirsty; and the farmer who lives close by invites unsuspecting boys to help themselves to apples and cherries, and then laughs at their blank faces when he demands payment for every mouthful.

We were a party of young people on pleasure bent, on our way to Bangor and thence to the wilds of Northern Maine, when the scenery of Camden Harbor tempted us to stop there for a day or two, and explore the country. And as the good people we met held up their hands with horror at the bare idea of our not picnicking at the turnpike, to the turnpike we went. We went through the usual programme. We spread the contents of our baskets in a shady spot, and while we shared the good things with the spiders, ants, and grasshoppers that came to the feast unbidden, the mosquitoes feasted on us.

We made wry faces over the lemonade; we visited the orchard of the crabbed old farmer who solemnly assured us that thieving boys were "thicker than Jews in Tophet"; we landed on all the islands, and even left in exile, for a brief period, a youth who was anxious to experience the emotions of Robinson Crusoe;

we skipped stones over the clear water of the pond, trembling meantime lest the frowning cliffs, by way of joining in the sport, should send down a rocky messenger to spoil our fun; and then some daring spirit proposed that we should climb the mountain.

"No one can do it who is n't pretty tough!" cried Robin, our oldest and wisest. "Somebody must stay here to watch the horses. Somebody must row out to that desert island and rescue the deluded exile. The sun is hot, and there is no path up the mountain. Whoever climbs must encounter bushes and briers, rocks and stumps. Who wants to go? Don't all speak at once!"

But we were not easily frightened, and having decided by lot which were the strongest, four of us provided ourselves with staves, and after a hard scramble scaled old Megunticook's least precipitous side, and stood triumphant on his ragged summit. With delighted exclamations we viewed "the scattered landscape

o'er." The broad bay with its white sails stretched away to the horizon on one hand; on the other, a succession of wooded hills and green valleys. The distant villages looked like white specks in the landscape, and here and there wreaths of smoke curled up from fires in the woods. Before us the mountain descended abruptly for several hundred feet, when the sheer precipice was broken by fallen bowlders which were piled up in wild confusion to the edge of the lake. A gentle breeze stirred the few low bushes and stunted trees that grew upon the mountain-top, and my eye caught a glimpse of something tall and white glistening through the leaves near the brink of the precipice.

Springing to the place and pushing away the intervening boughs, I uttered a cry of surprise which brought the others around me in an instant. "See!" I exclaimed, pointing to the strange object before me; "one would think we were in some Catholic country."

It was a simple wooden cross, painted white, firmly planted in the slight crumbling soil, and apparently fastened, in some mysterious way, to the rocky foundation beneath. On it, in deep-cut letters, was carved the one word: "Grace."

"A mystery!" cried Robin. "Now, if our romantic friend on the island were here, he would insist that a lovely damsel named Grace had been treacherously slain on this spot, probably by a disappointed lover; or that some unfortunate being oppressed with a guilty conscience had thrown himself over the precipice, and this cross was a prayer of grace for his soul."

"Nonsense," said Horton, who was severely practical. "It 's another 'Maiden Rock.' I have seen one in Maine already, where a love-sick Indian girl is supposed to have jumped off; but I did n't know any State boasted of more than one."

"Grace was no Indian maiden," said Hor-

ton's sister Ruth, quietly. She had been straying off by herself, but had joined our little group in time to hear her brother's speech.

"Why, what do you know about it?" we all exclaimed in surprise.

"That gossipy old lady at the hotel told me the story this morning, and a sad story it is. Several of the boarders corroborated it, and I intended to look for the cross the first thing, but quite forgot it, the view was so charming."

"And you never said a word about it! Kept it all to yourself! Now you shall do penance, you selfish creature, by sitting down on this rock and telling us the story," I cried.

And Ruth, vainly expostulating that there was not time, told us with much feeling the tragic story of the wooden cross.

"It's an 'ower true tale,'" she began, "but you must let me tell it my own way, and not mind if my fancy sometimes helps me out a little. It happened only a few years ago, in

1864, I think. It seems a young couple climbed to the mountain-top one summer day, as we have done; a young girl who lived in the farm-house yonder, and the youth to whom she was engaged. He had come down here the summer before to rest for a few weeks, having just finished his professional studies, and had fallen in love with the farmer's daughter. They say she was high-spirited and a bit wilful, and would have nothing to say to the honest young men hereabouts who ventured to admire her. She was an only child, and roamed among the hills at her own sweet will, a sort of mountain sprite. She was small and slight and very fair to look upon, and my old lady, who, by the way, is inclined to be rather romantic, said her eyes were as clear and deep and blue as the lake on whose banks she first opened them. The next summer her lover came again; and he asked Grace to be his wife, and go with him to the West, where he

was to begin his labors as a clergyman. After some hesitation, for though she loved him she was loath to leave her mountain home, she consented. They had climbed up here to take a last look at her beloved hills, and were standing arm in arm near the very place where we are seated now, when Grace exclaimed in her impetuous way, 'Only see that clump of harebells on the ledge below, James! I must have them, roots and all, to take with me.'

"'Dearest, you couldn't make harebells grow on those Western plains. They would not bear transplanting from their native soil.'

"'And how do you know *I* can bear transplanting?' she asked impulsively.

"'If I thought you could not bloom anywhere but on your native hills, my little mountain maid, I would go away alone and leave you here to gladden some happier man's life,' said the young man, softly, while a shade of sadness passed over his face.

"'O, forgive me!' said the girl, leaning fondly on her lover's arm. 'But I must have my harebells. I never saw such lovely ones. They 're as blue as the sky, and yet they never looked up to it.'

"'Perhaps they caught their delicate tints from the lake below,' replied James. 'Stay here, Grace, and I 'll find you some harebells as beautiful as those, that grow in a less dangerous place.'

"'But if I had those I should remember that they had all their lives looked down into my beautiful lake. They would seem part of my life here.'

"'But they grow out of reach, love, and one misstep would cost a life.'

"'If you should hold my hand, James, I could n't fall, and I could lean over, — so!' pleaded the girl. But the youth drew her back with a shudder.

"'It 's enough to make one dizzy to think of it, Grace. Wait for me on yonder rock.

I can be quicker alone, and it's growing dusk. Stay here till I come back. I know a place less steep than this where they grow. Promise me you'll wait here!"

"'Yes, I'll wait; don't be long,' said the girl, reluctantly.

"The young man was gone longer than he thought, and fully half an hour had elapsed when he hurried back, his hands full of harebells, calling, 'Come, Grace, we must go before it's any later.'

"Hearing no response, he hastened to the rock where he had left the girl, and was bewildered to find no one there.

"'Can she have gone down without me, or got frightened and gone to find me?' he thought.

"Suddenly, as if seized with a new dread, he dropped the harebells which he had procured with so much difficulty, and sprang to the verge of the precipice. No, the coveted harebells were still ungathered, and saucily

shook their blue bells at the youth as if to say, 'Pick us, if you dare!' He was turning away with a sigh of relief, when a fragment of white muslin, fluttering from a bush beneath, caught his eye. His heart gave one wild beat; then for an instant he seemed paralyzed. But in another moment he had swung himself over the dizzy height, and was leaping from crag to crag, clinging to the stunted trees, and tearing his hands and clothes on the sharp rocks in his crazy descent. How he made the perilous leap he could never tell; both then and afterward it seemed like a horrible dream. Before long his worst fears were realized, for he discovered Grace lying pale and motionless at the foot of a great bowlder which had intercepted her fall. Finding it was useless to try to rescue her from her dangerous position, he hastened toward the road with the hope of hailing some passer-by. As good fortune would have it, two gentlemen were driving by the lake at that mo-

ment, and stopped on seeing the young man leap over the rocks, and wave his cap, like one mad. They helped him extricate the unfortunate girl, and as the twilight shadows gathered, bore her home and laid the bruised form in her weeping mother's arms. She lived only a few hours. Her lover soon went away, and has never been seen here since. Her father erected the cross, partly as a warning to other daring adventurers."

"You've made quite a story of it," said Robin, placing his hand on the cross and looking over the top. "There are the harebells!"

We all peeped carefully over, and it really seemed as if the graceful little wild-flowers were more beautiful than any we had seen before.

"How do you account for your heroine's breaking her promise?" asked Horton.

"Her friends thought she got tired of waiting and could n't resist the desire to steal one more look at the flowers that had so taken

her fancy, and she was careless and lost her footing."

"Perhaps it was better so," remarked Robin, sagely. "The atmosphere of the West might not have agreed with her any more than with the mountain harebells. And probably the heart-broken lover has consoled himself, long before this, with some buxom prairie lass. But come, the sun is going down, and so must we."

This mournful story, which I heard afterwards from a relative of the unfortunate girl, is little known; and but few of the gay people who drive around the turnpike in the summer months ever look up to the white cross which is just visible through the green leaves on the mountain-top.

Those who do discover it little dream of its meaning, thinking it perhaps some Coast Survey signal. To us who visited Megunticook that summer day the place is associated forever with the memory of the mountain

girl. The simple monument which bears her name still stands; and the treacherous little flowers that beckoned her to ruin toss their blue bells as merrily as ever, while the dancing lake ripples as gayly over its pebbly banks as if no shadow of terror had ever darkened its limpid waters.

TWO BRAVE WOMEN.

MORE than two centuries ago the old town of Machias, in the eastern part of Maine, — *Majais*, the French called it, — was well known to English and French adventurers, and was the scene of many bitter quarrels between them. It was first settled by the French, who gave to all that part of Maine the beautiful name of Acadia.

Soon after the battle of Lexington a certain Captain Jones, of Boston, arrived at Machias with his two sloops. He was in the habit of "trading" with the Machias people, exchanging the goods and provisions he carried there for lumber. This time he was accompanied by an armed schooner, and was

careful not to land his goods till the people agreed to trade with him as usual. Probably this very caution made them suspicious; and then it was not pleasant to see a British cutter anchored in their river. They knew that lumber was just what the royal troops needed for their barracks; the affair at Lexington had aroused all their patriotic ardor; and they determined that Captain Jones should never return to Boston with his vessels. To understand what this decision cost them, we must remember that the settlers were wholly dependent on "lumbering" for support.

To be sure, the men did not have to make long journeys on their sleds into the forests and there camp out for the winter, as the lumbermen of Maine do now. Then there were woods everywhere about the settlement, which was at a great distance from any large town; and as there were no roads, the only way to get relief in a time of need was by water, and this way could be easily cut off

by an enemy. Except a scanty supply of potatoes, no vegetables were raised there; and the people owned very few cows, and only oxen enough to haul lumber in winter. Many families often had nothing but clams to eat for weeks at a time, and when Captain Jones's sloops arrived there were not provisions enough in the township to last three weeks. But rather than let King George's troops have any of their lumber, these destitute people made up their minds to starve.

So they agreed to take possession of the sloops and of the Margaretta also, the story of whose capture has been told too often to be repeated here. A company of volunteers was organized on Sunday, the 11th of June, but only a few charges of powder and ball could be mustered for twenty fowling-pieces. Besides these, they had only thirteen pitchforks and ten or twelve axes.

There was not much time to talk the matter over, and a man was quickly sent to Jones-

boro, a settlement some sixteen miles distant, for ammunition. But after this messenger had reached his destination he refused to return.

As there was no other man to take his place, all the Jonesboro men having gone to Machias that very day to assist in the capture of the vessels, the women were filled with indignation at this treachery; and Hannah Weston, a young bride of seventeen, whose husband and brothers were among the volunteers, went round to the various houses in the settlement and collected all the powder, lead, and pewter spoons she could find. Then she and her sister Rebecca, who was only two years older, determined to carry the ammunition to Machias themselves. They started on their rough tramp Monday morning, with about forty pounds of powder and lead, bread and meat enough to last two days, and a small hatchet. All the women and children gathered to see them off; meantime the one man in the settlement, the recreant

messenger, was hiding in the woods for fear of the "Britishers"!

When half the toilsome journey was over, Rebecca's strength failed, and Mrs. Weston relieved her of her burden, carrying the whole load herself the rest of the way. There was no road, and indeed no path through the dense pine forests. But the men who passed through the woods the day before had "spotted" a tree here and there, and these faint marks were our heroines' only guides through the wilderness. When they lost their way, which happened to them more than once, they sat down on the trunk of some fallen tree to rest and refresh themselves with food, and then kept bravely on. After wandering several miles out of their way, they at length reached the Machias River, and decided to follow its course down to the settlement. As the Indians were often seen on the river in canoes, and frequented its banks for game, our travellers kept at a safe distance from

the stream. But there was little to fear from the red men; and indeed nothing saved Machias in those stormy days but the friendliness of the Indians.

About dusk, after crossing brooks and wading through muddy swamps, the women came to the foot of a high hill, and, not knowing where they were, threw themselves wearily down to rest. There in the gathering twilight they heard the mournful owls hooting and the distant barking of wolves. At length Mrs. Weston, picking up a stout stick for a cane, climbed the hill alone, and from the top joyfully discovered the houses of Machias. Tying her handkerchief to a bush, that she might again find the spot, she hastened back to Rebecca. But the tired girl had fallen into a heavy sleep, and it was only after a vigorous shaking that her sister was able to arouse her.

They arrived at Machias before dark, completely exhausted, with their clothes half torn

from them, and learned that the Margaretta had already been captured. However, they were so glad to hear the good news that they did not regret what they had done; and though the ammunition was not needed then, it proved very useful when the British afterwards attacked the town.

The next day, to show that their services were appreciated, the Committee of Safety made the two brave women a present of twelve yards of camlet, worth about eight dollars; and this was considered at that time a large sum. Two dresses were made of this cloth, and fifty years afterwards a fragment of her camlet gown was carefully preserved by Mrs. Weston as a memento of her perilous journey.

She lived to be nearly one hundred years old, and when she was ninety-five she carded wool, spun the yarn, and knit it into a pair of stockings, without the aid of glasses, to be exhibited at the World's Fair in New York.

It is interesting to know that this woman was a descendant of the famous Mrs. Dustan, who was taken captive by the Indians at Haverhill, Massachusetts, in 1697; for she may have inherited some of her pluck and fortitude from her great-grandmother.

This adventure has not been recorded among the deeds of brave women of the Revolution; but when the story of the first naval battle of the war, the "Lexington of the sea," is told, Hannah Weston's name should not be forgotten.

A DYING RACE.

WHY does not some benevolent person organize a society for the protection of plants? Our societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals increase and multiply, and the chief apostle of the cause is constantly on the war-path, ubiquitous, irrepressible, a terror to evil-doers. But the children of the soil, which live, move, and have their being in so many bright and beautiful forms, suffer almost unnoticed. They perish by violence, or are banished from their peaceful haunts by bold and grasping foreigners, as our native song-birds are driven away by the saucy little English sparrows. Yet these friends of mankind are lineal descendants of

the very oldest families, and have such intimate relations with the animal kingdom that it is impossible, in their lowest forms, to distinguish the plant from the animal. To be sure, the trees, which are so needlessly sacrificed all about us, find some able champions, and it is cheering to know that the planting of forests is encouraged at the West by the local governments. But do we realize how rapidly our wild-flowers are disappearing, frightened away by the encroachments of man? The flora of some parts of the West has almost entirely changed within a few years. Weeds and vagabond plants from the Eastern States, those "gypsies of the vegetable world," have crowded out the native growth; and one who now goes West, having heard much of the blossoming prairie, is apt to think it all a delusion and a snare. The increasing love and cultivation of flowers is a good sign of the times; but what garden flower can eclipse in beauty the fragrant clusters of

swamp pink, or azalea, the brilliant cardinal-flower, the dainty lady's-slipper, the drooping arethusa, or the painted trillium? Every year these fair harbingers of spring grow more and more scarce. We cut down the woods which shelter them; we trample them down, invade their sanctuaries, and let in the glaring light of day upon the sweet seclusion of their lives. Thus they retreat farther and farther from the abodes of man; or when they still lovingly linger about their old haunts, meekly crying, "All we want is to be let alone," we give them no peace. We either pick the blossoms so thoroughly that they have no opportunity to propagate themselves by seed, or gather them so carelessly that the very roots come up in our hands. The trailing arbutus has been actually exterminated in many parts of New England by being pulled up in this reckless way. The beautiful "Hartford fern," as it is popularly called, is threatened by a similar fate. This is one of the

few species of climbing fern, and the only one found in the United States. But though it is so rare, and grows in only a few localities, it is brought in large quantities to Boston every autumn and sold in bunches, roots and all, at the street corners. Indeed, there is such a *furore* now for pressing and transplanting ferns, that many of the more common kinds are growing rare.

A striking illustration of the wild-flower's readiness to resent familiarity is furnished by that curious plant, the Indian pipe. It lifts its cluster of waxy stems, crowned with pale, nodding flowers, from the rich soil of deep, dark woods; but if handled, no matter how charily, its hue changes to a deep black.

Yet what happiness to discover the haunts of these untrained beauties! Ah, those poor unfortunates who only see the mayflowers tied up in stiff little bunches in our city streets know nothing about it. Then, too, wild-flowers are graceful ornaments for the house,

and in early spring nothing can be more charming than a dish of violets, hepaticas, and anemones, grouped with moss about the stems, as if growing in the water. But better "love the wood-rose and leave it on its stalk," than rob the woods and fields forever of their short-lived glory. On the border of some dense woods upon the coast of Maine I once discovered a large clump of rhododendrons, a shrub hitherto unknown in that region, all in full bloom. With the air of a second Columbus, I carried home great branches of the magnificent flowers and divided them among my friends, far and wide. From that day my treasures were doomed. Enthusiastic women, arming themselves with trowels and knives, made repeated pilgrimages to the spot, and transported the plants to their gardens, where they invariably pined away and died. In a short time only a few poor shrubs were left, and they, robbed of their glory, indignantly refused to blossom more. A patch of hare-

bells, those "bonny blue bells" of Scotland, was afterward ruined in the same way; and a certain sunny hillside, which the melting snow once left fairly blue with hepaticas, has been despoiled in like manner. And now if I know where the mayflower hides its pink buds, or the maiden-hair spreads its delicate green, I dare not breathe the secret to my dearest friend. I pursue the most roundabout paths to reach the charmed spot, watching, like a guilty thing, lest my steps should be dogged. And when people say, "O, how lovely! where did you get it?" I conscientiously direct them so that they can never find the place.

It is true that many wild-flowers, if properly moved, bloom and thrive in the garden; but their charm is gone. They not only seem to lose their native modesty and grace among the flaunting garden-flowers, but their surroundings, the protecting old trees, the moss-grown stumps, the trailing vines, and all the green things that run riot in the forest are

wanting. And the poor little strangers remind one of Emerson's captured sparrow: —

> "He sings the song, but it pleases not now,
> For I did not bring home the river and sky; —
> He sang to my ear, — they sang to my eye."

Now most of our native flowers may be easily coaxed back to the woods and groves, and we have many parks and shaded pleasure-grounds where they will grow luxuriantly. This experiment has been tried with perfect success at Bussey Institute, near Boston; and the beautiful Bussey forest is gladly carpeting itself with wild-flowers, as if hoping their fresh innocence will cover up the stain upon its guilty heart. Most of these plants need no special preparation of soil, and once started take care of themselves. With our own wild-flowers we can plant many beautiful Western species, and even those of other lands may be naturalized in our woods. The roots or seeds of the best hardy exotics may be easily procured, and will thrive in our northern climate

as well as native plants. Thus our wild or partly cultivated places can be made attractive with very little trouble. The exquisite water-lily may be planted in bogs and ponds, and on the margins the marsh marigolds, the "winking Mary buds" of Shakespeare, will "ope their golden eyes." While in dryer spots the columbine and anemones, wild roses and harebells, the bloodroot, Solomon's seal, and an endless variety of our neglected wood-flowers will take root and make the desert-places bloom with beauty.

The prevailing ignorance about even our simplest plants is almost incredible. A lady who lived in a rural town once declared that none of her gentlemen friends knew what a potato-blossom was. This assertion being treated with scorn, she filled a vase with the blossoms and presented it to her brothers, who had hoed potato-hills all their lives, but could not guess what these strange flowers were. Not content with this test, the same lady

actually went to an evening party with potato-blossoms in her hair. The pretty purple and white flowers were much admired, and nobody suspected their ignominious origin. Not long since, a gentleman of wealth and taste nursed in his conservatory what he supposed a rare plant. Everybody admired the delicate green foliage drooping over the pot, but no one could tell what it was, till an old farmer, with a hearty laugh, revealed the secret. It was the common chickweed!

Unfortunately the ancient traditions which throw an added charm over so many of the English wild-flowers we must do without, or take at second-hand. Moreover, we are not a sentimental people, and we cherish neither ruins nor traditions. An Englishman plucks the common dog rose, and remembers that he holds in his hand the military badge of the doomed houses of Lancaster and York. No fragrant romances cluster about our own wild-roses; indeed, we are apt to consider ourselves

fortunate if that fashionable epidemic known as "rose cold" allows us to gather them at all! The forget-me-not, according to Miss Strickland, was first used as a parting token by a royal hand, that of a Plantagenet; while the very name of that famous race of kings is said to have been taken from the common broom, the *Plantagenista.* But though no associations with royalty endear our native flowers to our democratic hearts, the Indians have left us a few legends, and we can make the floral histories, myths, and traditions of all other lands our own. In our country strolls we shall give a second look at the fragrant white clover, if we remember it is the far-famed shamrock of Ireland. The ox-eyed daisy, which our maidens call *Marguerite,* the abhorred whiteweed of the farmer, gains new importance in our eyes when we reflect that the European daisy was the favorite device of the unhappy Margaret of Anjou, and that it was worn in the hair and embroidered upon

the robes of the maids of honor, as our field daisy is now worn by modern belles.

No one disputes the services done by plants to man in the way of food, or medicine, or clothing. The belief in the medicinal virtues of certain herbs is common, and there are old women who still make "diet drinks," prepare yearly conserves of rose-leaves, and rejoice in elderberry wine; though the elder-bush was probably never planted before houses in this country to keep off witches, unless in the troublous times of the Salem witchcraft! But the good done by the mere beauty of the wayside flowers is not so easily computed. Who shall say how many wanderers have been guided to heaven by these "stars of earth"? The Flower Missions do their best work in bringing the blossoms of the woods and fields, from the buttercups and violets of early spring to the asters and golden-rod of autumn, into the close wards of the hospitals.

The sweet violets may deck our meadows

and the golden-rod hang its rich tassels from the roadside for ages to come. But the shy woodland flowers are melting away before the inroads of civilization, like those ruder aborigines, the Indians. Before they completely vanish, can we not intercept their flight and bid them stay? It will cost a little money, a little labor, and — hardest of all, O countrymen and lovers! — a little time. But we shall save a dying race; and lo! future generations will rise up and call us blessed.

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS.

IF a stranger to modern ways of doing things should stroll through our Northern cities during the winter months, he might well ask, "Did not the birds go South last year?" For wherever he could turn, some bright-winged bird would meet his puzzled eye. In all variety of plumage, from the gaudy colors of the tropics to sombre brown and gray, these "children of the air" flit through our streets. The scarlet tanager has forgotten his sunny Southern haunts, the indigo-bird bravely faces our icy blasts, and even those delicate little fairies, the humming-birds, have not deserted us. But, alas! these brilliant visions are only ghosts of

birds, mute warblers, little captives deprived of life and light and song. The outspread wings have lost their magic power, and the little feet, instead of clasping some swaying bough, have been hopelessly entangled in meshes of velvet and lace. Here, there, and everywhere the same strange phenomenon has been visible. At least every other woman on the street has worn a hat surmounted by a bird, or by an ingenious patchwork affair which reminds one of the insect manufactured to puzzle Professor Agassiz. Tall women and short women, richly dressed women and shabbily dressed women, little girls and big girls, have decorated themselves with these spoils of the forest. Not only in the street, but in the ball-room, on head-dresses and in the hair, these feathered ornaments have been worn; so that "a fashionable lady's coiffure," to quote a recent Paris letter, "has furnished material for a naturalist's study." Have the little songsters committed some unpardonable mis-

demeanor, that this edict of death has gone forth, or has popular opinion decreed that the groves are no longer the fitting haunts of birds, and that their proper nestling-place is a woman's hat?

To be sure, the custom of wearing feathers can boast of respectable antiquity, for even the nimble god Mercury wore a cap with wings. Savages have decorated themselves with the tufts and plumes of birds from time immemorial, but they have been influenced by deeper reasons than the love of display. The battle-field had no terrors for the natives of New Guinea when they wore the skins of "God's bird," — the bird-of-paradise. The American Indians believed that all the good qualities of certain birds were bestowed upon the wearer of their feathers. But a bird on a woman's hat to-day has but one meaning, and that is vanity. Wallace, in the account of his travels in the Malay Archipelago, says the natives were deeply puzzled to know why

he preserved so many birds and insects. At length they arrived at a solution of the mystery, and an old man, with an air of profound conviction, exclaimed, "They all come to life again: that's what they do, — they all come to life again!"

I see a beautiful bird perched on the crown of a woman's hat, with bent head and outspread wings; its whole poise is suggestive of the famous blackbird in the nursery rhyme; and if the little victim before me should "come to life again" and take a similar revenge, I should not be surprised. If a woman must wear a bird, why does she not show a little taste in her selection, and choose one whose appearance will harmonize somewhat with her own? Why do meek little maidens overshadow themselves with "winged flames" from tropical wilds, and stalwart matrons affect the dainty humming-birds? Fashion delights to set all the laws of nature at defiance, but she never showed more plainly her ignorance

of the fitness of things than when she took the birds from their native haunts and perched their lifeless bodies upon the heads of our mothers and sisters and daughters.

But in comparison with other aspects of the subject, the mere question of good or bad taste is of little account. That the fashion of using birds for ornament is a cruel one, probably never entered the minds of most women. When our fashionable ladies or fair young girls stand before a counter covered with rich plumes and stuffed birds of rare beauty, do they pause to think how many joyous lives were sacrificed, how many happy woodland homes destroyed, how many gushes of song stilled forever, that they might deck themselves with these colors stolen from the woods and fields and shores? Unfortunately this fashion is not confined to the cities. Many young women who live in the country persuade their brothers or friends to shoot every bright-winged bird they see. These

are easily preserved without the aid of the taxidermist; and when the ruthless winds blow off the head or tail of one little victim, another is ready to take its place. Yet these very women have tender hearts, and would shrink from inflicting needless pain on any creature, had not love of "style" blinded their eyes. The number of birds sacrificed to this senseless custom has caused an alarming diminution of some of our most beautiful species; and in certain localities the indigo-bird, and other birds of bright plumage, are almost extinct. The apostles of dress-reform might find here a worthy field for their efforts, for it rests with women alone whether this cruel custom shall be abandoned or perpetuated.

The value of the smaller birds to mankind is a truth not yet fully recognized, or, if generally known, it is everywhere disregarded. Longfellow's poem, "The Birds of Killingworth," gives a truthful description of what has happened in many places both here and

across the sea, where a "St. Bartholomew of birds" has been inaugurated only to be followed by the most disastrous consequences. Happily the days when farmers made a business of killing the "winged wardens" of their orchards and grain-fields have gone by. The annual shooting-matches of the rural districts, when each party strove to destroy the largest number of wild creatures, have, to a great extent, been abolished; and the accounts of the immense bird-hunts, like that which occurred in North Bridgewater, Massachusetts, in 1820, where the birds were killed off in such quantities that cart-loads of them were sold to the farmers for fertilizing the soil, seem now like some pitiful tale of fiction. Yet in all parts of the country for the last few years there has been a steady decrease in the number of birds. A speedy retribution follows when the nicely balanced laws of nature are disturbed. Those deadly enemies of vegetation, the hosts of devouring insects, are upon

us, and new species are constantly appearing. If we consider the astonishing rate at which insects multiply, we shall better understand these rapid inroads. Reaumur says that one of those little pests known as plant-lice or aphides may become the progenitor of six thousand millions in one season. This marvellous power of reproduction may well make us tremble. A careful writer on this subject estimates the annual loss from destruction of property by insects in the United States to amount to four hundred millions of dollars, and to this devastation he attributes the high price of farm produce, and the increase of distress and want in our large cities. At least one eighth of this loss might be avoided, he declares, by the careful protection of birds.

Innumerable instances might be given of important services thus rendered by birds in different parts of the world. Michelet says one pair of sparrows carries to the nest 4,300 caterpillars in a week; and, according to

Audubon, a woodcock will eat its own weight of insects in a single night. A titmouse introduced into a conservatory has been known to cleanse, in a few hours, rose-bushes which were infested with thousands of the aphides. If the birds are banished or annihilated, shall we not be at the mercy of these myriads of destroyers? Even now what suffering is caused at the West by the ravages of grasshoppers! The devices of man are of little avail, our deadly poisons are wofully insufficient, and sooner or later we are forced to imitate our sharp-shooters in the late war, and "pick off the enemy one by one." How much more effectually the birds would do it for us!

Multitudes of birds are yearly killed for scientific purposes and for public and private collections. Only a short time ago a gentleman returned from Arizona with a thousand bird-skins for the Smithsonian Institution. With all due reverence for science, it must be conceded that naturalists are not as scrupulous

about taking life or inflicting pain as they might be. Few of them are as humane as our own Thoreau, who told an ornithologist, who insisted upon holding his bird in his hand, that he would rather hold it in his affections. Many people who do not aspire to possess collections of birds contrive to ornament their rooms with single specimens. Which is more painful, to see a winged creature shut up in a cage, or to discover these lifeless ornaments, poor effigies of birds, perched upon the picture-frames, hidden under glass cases on the mantel, or perhaps sitting on their rifled nests, which have been transported, branches and all, to the parlor? Leonardo da Vinci bought singing-birds in cages merely to set them free. In these days of cheap and beautiful pictures and statuettes, among the variety of small ornaments to be had almost for the asking, can we not emancipate the birds?

Birds are even more desperately pursued for their flesh than for their plumage. Audubon

says that when he first went to Kentucky the pinnated grouse was so abundant that no hunter deigned to shoot it. Twenty-five years later the grouse had abandoned the State. Prairie-chickens are now slaughtered in such quantities at the West that there is reason to fear the shy, pretty creatures will soon be exterminated. Men hunt them with trained dogs, kill all they can, and wastefully throw away all of the bird but the breast. At a prize hunt in Minnesota last summer nine hundred prairie-chickens were killed in a day within the area of one township. The passenger pigeon, now rarely seen in the Eastern States, once bred in Massachusetts woods, and the ruffed grouse and several species of wild ducks were abundant in the same State. The bird-laws are as stringent as the prohibitory law, and quite as effectual. The abominable snares and traps, the deadly broadsides from batteries and pivot-guns, the ingenuity of sportsmen, who by their decoys

and mock-whistles lure whole flocks of birds within rifle range, have done their work, and we doubt whether posterity will ever hear of "quail on toast," or know the flavor of woodcock or grouse. Game is yearly diminishing in Europe as well as in this country, and it is only within recent years that protection has been secured there for the small birds, which have been attacked and slaughtered with ferocious zeal. Italy, whose delightful climate attracts many species of birds, has been described as "that land of song where a man no sooner hears a feathered warbler sing than he desires to shoot and eat it." It is said that a veteran Italian hunter is as proud of a string of dead linnets as any English boy of his first bag of grouse. The ancient Romans — poor benighted heathen! — feasted on flamingoes' tongues and the brains of pheasants and peacocks. But in this era of the world, in the boasted nineteenth century, man, who is a little lower than the angels, sits down to a

banquet of thrushes, eats the lark which at heaven's gate sings, even devours the nightingale! Mrs. Somerville, in her "Personal Recollections," speaks of a gentleman who won her heart at a dinner-party in Rome by crying out, "What, robins, — our household birds! I would as soon eat a child."

Foolish superstition has caused the destruction of many useful birds, such as the chimney-swallow and whippoorwill, which have been considered birds of ill omen. Then, too, the birds which go South often perish in large numbers on their perilous journeys. "The eagle waits on his crag; man watches in the valley." The lighthouses, which save so many human lives, are terribly fatal to the birds, which are killed by flying against the thick glass of the lantern. Mrs. Thaxter tells us that three hundred and seventy-five dead birds have been picked up in one morning at the foot of the lighthouse tower on the Isles of Shoals.

Thus it certainly seems as if the whole race of birds were doomed. Few people besides naturalists know what interesting and intelligent little creatures they are, how wonderfully organized, how delicately susceptible to joy and pain. "I turn this thrush in my hand," writes a lover of birds; "I remember its strange ways, the curious look it gave me, its ineffable music, its freedom, and its ecstasy, and I tremble lest I have slain a being diviner than myself." The wide-spread belief that birds and animals were created only for the use and amusement of man is a doctrine unworthy of Christendom. The whale, otter, and seal have been so relentlessly pursued that they are fast disappearing. In Europe an oyster famine is predicted, for that favorite bivalve has been "dredged to death." The wholesale slaughter of buffaloes on the Western plains is another instance of our folly and reckless waste of life. The penguin, which is valued for its oil, is chased by small vessels

fitted out for that purpose, and these vessels take, upon an average, three hundred thousand penguins each. The pursuit of this bird is compared to that of the wingless auk, and the same fate is predicted for it, — that of utter extinction. "Birds are given for the use of man," says a well-known sportsman's book, "and if they serve to supply him with food or healthful exercise, they have answered their purpose." O heartless and godless creed! Let us go to the East and learn a lesson of heathen nations. The instinctive tenderness and reverence felt by the Orientals for life in any form is to many the great charm of the East. The Buddhists established hospitals for sick animals, and the Egyptians saw something divine in all living things. The same kindly spirit prompts the people of Sweden and Norway to place sheaves of barley and oats on high poles before the houses at Christmas-time, that the birds too may have a feast.

For our own sake, for the sake of all man-

kind, let us spare our benefactors the birds! The grace and beauty of their forms and plumage we can never recreate; their exquisite melodies we cannot imitate; the secret of their flight baffles all the ingenuity of man. Instead of living as if their chief mission were to torture and destroy, let earth-bound mortals look with awe and reverence upon winged life, — that "strange, delicate, mighty dream of God."

PASSENGER PIGEONS.

FOR many days the fresh morning air had resounded with the dull bumming of the prairie-chickens, and an unbroken line of snowy "schooners," as the emigrant-wagons are called on the prairies, had slowly moved westward. These wagons were followed by droves of cattle; and the cattle were driven by brown, dusty women, barefooted, and scantily clothed in blue drilling or patched and faded chintz. I had looked curiously at the labor-saving churns in which butter was made by the mere motion of the jolting wagons; I had questioned the rough-looking Germans and Norwegians, who often could not speak a word of English; and I was never weary of

watching for the bright eyes of the dingy-faced little children, who sometimes peeped from the wagons. When these weary travellers halted by the wayside, and their gypsy fires blazed out into the night, what wild sweet singing was borne across the prairie on the evening breeze!

But one day I forgot my slow-plodding friends, in the excitement of watching the passage of a multitude of travellers who could no more be numbered than the sands upon the sea-shore. What a commotion the shy strangers made that early May morning! I was startled from sleep by a voice crying, "The pigeons!" and a strange sound, like the rushing of a strong wind, came to my ears. The air was full of flying birds, and for hours I watched the immense flock pass over that little prairie village in Minnesota. The birds flew very low, and hundreds of them alighted on the trees in passing. They often alight in such numbers that great branches are broken

off, and sometimes the pigeons are crushed to death. The fields bordering the river were covered with them; but they only stopped to rest, apparently, or perhaps to pick up a little food, and were again on the wing. As these detachments of the vast army of pigeons rose from the ground, with a great flapping of wings, others alighted; meanwhile the main flock was passing steadily over our heads. The procession seemed endless, for the day wore on, and still the swift-winged birds rustled through the air, and still the coming flocks looked like delicate pencillings on the distant sky. It was a rare day for sportsmen. Instead of roosting in a neighboring forest, as we had hoped, the pigeons flew over into Wisconsin. But every day through the summer stray flocks foraged among the oak groves about us, and their shadows swept over sunny slopes and fields of waving grain, like flitting clouds.

From their nesting-place the birds flew all

over Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin in quest of food; but they always returned as the sun went down, though the roost was hundreds of miles distant. Audubon says that these pigeons travel at the rate of a mile in a minute, and that if one of them were to follow the fashion, and take a trip to Europe, it could cross the ocean in less than three days. When they fly through the woods, the sound of their wings is almost deafening; an old farmer compares it to the roar of ten thousand threshing-machines! But quite as wonderful as their speed is the great power of vision these birds possess. As they journey through space, they can overlook hundreds of acres at once, and their sharp eyes can discover at a glance whether the country beneath them is barren, or supplied with the food they need. The piece of woods that the pigeons selected in which to rear their young is three or four miles wide and ten miles long. Their nests were in every tree; sometimes more than fifty

nests could be seen in one tree. In each of these frail nests, carelessly woven of a few twigs, two white shining eggs were laid.

When the young pigeons or squabs are almost ready to fly, comes the exciting time known as robbing the roost. Men arm themselves with long poles, with which they upset the nests; the poor squabs fall to the ground, and are easily caught in large numbers. They can then be kept in cages, fattened, and killed as they are wanted.

The passenger pigeon does not migrate from one part of the country to another to find a warmer climate, but only in search of food. So many of these birds are killed every year, for the New York and other markets, that it seems as if they must gradually disappear. But they multiply very rapidly, and Audubon thought that nothing but the destruction of our forests could lessen their number.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

CERTAIN persons are forever wailing over the lost virtues of the past, and shaking their wise heads over the ruinous customs and habits of to-day. Now, when it is becoming to recall the doings and sayings of our forefathers, let us look the truth in the face.

In the first place, we are often reminded that our ancestors "rose with the lark, and with the lark to bed." No doubt this was true in the first youth of the Colonies. The worthy citizens of New Amsterdam retired at sundown, and in New England the nine-o'clock bell was a signal few marauders dared disobey. If the "head" of a family had the

hardihood to be out after that time, he was supposed to be lost, and the minister was aroused from his slumbers to go in search of the missing man. Even in fashionable society the orthodox hour was not always despised; for at a New-Year's levee given by Mrs. Washington in 1790, when the clock struck nine the hostess remarked, with that courageous truthfulness which distinguished her husband's boyhood, "The General always retires at nine, and I usually precede him." Whereupon all the guests at once took leave. Mrs. Washington's usual receptions, however, lasted from eight till ten; but later hours were not unknown even at an earlier date than this. We find an allusion in Irving's "Life of Washington" to a custom prevailing in Maryland when the roads were too rough for carriages, and ladies rode on ponies, followed by servants in livery: "In this way the young ladies from the country used to come to balls at Annapolis, riding with their

hoops arranged 'fore and aft,' like lateen-sails; and after dancing all night, ride home again in the morning." At an entertainment given in Philadelphia by the French minister at the close of the war, the dancing began at half past eight, and supper was served at twelve. And a favorite amusement of the young Philadelphians was driving to the fashionable resort called Gray's Inn, on the banks of the Schuylkill, and there dancing till morning.

It was not the custom in fashionable society for bridal couples to take wedding trips; but the bride was expected to receive her friends *daily* for four successive weeks. What an infliction this would be considered by modern belles! A knowledge of heraldry was then considered indispensable by most aristocratic ladies and gentlemen. Music was not wholly neglected, for before the Revolution Mrs. Washington ordered from London, together with a "puckered petticoat of a fashionable color, 2 handsome breast-flowers, hair-

pins, sugar candy, — a Book of newest and best Songs, set to music for the spinnet."

There was a great passion for gambling among both sexes, though it was generally agreed that no one should play for money during the war. The Philadelphia ladies boasted that they could entertain company by conversation, while their New York sisters were obliged to resort to card-tables at their social gatherings. But it is said that when the first winter Congress was in session in Philadelphia, it was no unusual thing for a man or woman to lose three or four hundred dollars in one evening.

Whist-clubs flourished even in New England, and their members gave elaborate dinners, at which much wine and punch were consumed. After dinner cards were played till near midnight, when it was the fashion to indulge again in the flowing bowl. Indeed, the punch-bowl held a very conspicuous position in the homes and affections of our fathers.

And it was not confined to the haunts of the free-hearted Southerners or the pleasure-loving New-Yorkers, but figured largely in the land of the Puritans. We may suppose that "aqua vitæ" did not flow very freely during the first struggle of the little colonies for life, for Longfellow tells us that the master of the Mayflower was

"Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but Gospel."

But in after-years, whatever privations and hardships were encountered, there was at least a generous allowance of rum, and distilleries were scattered broadcast. The Puritans, with their severe code of morals, their dreaded whipping-posts and pillories, and their propensity for hanging Quakers and witches, thus countenanced a custom which was to bring untold miseries upon their descendants. Those who could not afford to give dinner

and card parties yet had their mahogany sideboards well stocked with "strong water," and the customary greeting to a visitor was, "What will you take?"

Twice a day, at eleven and four, farmers sent their little sons to carry rum to the workmen in the field, and it would have been considered very cruel not to give the washerwoman her morning tumbler of rum. When frame houses were built, the whole settlement was expected to assist in the raising, and no building could be erected without rum. In a certain village in Maine, in 1794, "it was voted to get one barrel of good West India rum and one hundred pounds of maple-sugar, to be used at the raising of the meeting-house." It was a common practice, down to a comparatively recent date, to sell town paupers at public auction to those who would agree to support them at the lowest price, and in some towns a glass of rum was bestowed upon each person who would under-

bid his predecessor. On "training-days" the whole population assembled on the village green, and after prayer had been offered by the parson standing on the church steps, the company was marched to the tavern and dismissed, when a general carousing ensued. Men drank till they were hopelessly intoxicated; boys drained the dregs from the emptied pails; and, almost too shocking to recall, "little children sucked the grass where the liquor fell." On other days men and boys went to the tavern for their "eleven-o'clock," and on election days there were plenty of "liquor fights." And at husking-bees and other rustic merry-makings the supper-tables were laden not only with pumpkin-pies, doughnuts, and gingerbread, but with bottles of porter and wine and jugs of distilled spirits.

Even the clergy shared to some extent in the general dissipation. "The practice of card-playing, late hours, and drinking received too much encouragement from those who took

the lead in social circles," writes an old New England chronicler, "and it was a great recommendation of a newly settled minister that he was free from these immoralities. Doubtless many of these pleasure-loving parsons would have offered the same excuse which was given by Cooper's New York divine, when reproved for attending cock-fights: "There are so few amusements for people of education in this country."

And indeed we must bear in mind that this was before the day of lecture bureaus and lyceums, that books were scarce, the theatre forbidden, and music, except that of the fife and drum, almost unknown. The Southern planters lived in luxurious idleness upon their great estates, devoted to the chase and the race-ground, and served by scores of negroes. The fashionables of the cities enjoyed their card-parties and routs, while the country folk resorted to tea-parties and quiltings. Tea-parties began at three o'clock and ended at sun-

set; a great deal of knitting was done in the mean time, and a deal of gossiping as well. For in the absence of all our ingenious devices for killing time, even such exciting games as battledoor and shuttlecock being confined to the cities, it was natural that the faintest rumor should be made much of. The grave Quakers, however, gave no countenance to this foible, but held themselves aloof from their scandal-loving neighbors. Politics raged, then and afterward, with a bitterness now unknown. Unpopular candidates were burned in effigy, members of opposing parties scarcely recognized each other, and excited political discussions were the order of the day. It would be well for us to remember that even in those days public men were criticised and distrusted. The daughter of John Adams, after dining with several members of Congress in New York in 1788, wrote to her mother: "If you had been present you would have trembled for your country, to have seen,

heard, and observed the men who are its rulers. Very different they were, I believe, in times past."

Many of the clergy took a leading part in politics, and in 1812 the administration was fearlessly denounced from pulpits all over New England.

There was then no sympathy between churches of different creeds, and no exchange of pulpits. Sunday was a solemn day, when if a man took a walk or any innocent recreation, he was liable to be put in the stocks and saluted with a shower of eggs. This sombre day was always dreaded by children, who were obliged to conduct their small persons with the strictest propriety. Some of the most bigoted went so far as to pronounce flowers in children's hands "a dreadful wicked thing on the Lord's Day." Their only diversion during the long service was to count the tassels on the pulpit drapery. Boy-nature sometimes rebelled, and I know of one ur-

chin who caught a mouse at noon "between meetings," and carried the little prisoner to church in his handkerchief to play with during the service. As the services lasted several hours, no wonder constables with long wands were required, in the early days of the Colonies, to keep people awake. Afterwards, men and women took sprigs of fennel, which were supposed to answer the same purpose.

But the long sermons could be endured better than the almost endless prayers; for standing so long was wearisome to the flesh, and children occasionally fell asleep and dropped down, while young women often fainted and were carried out of church. To be sure, it was sometimes whispered that the latter impropriety was owing quite as much to tight lacing as to the long prayers.

A certain venerable author, who looks back to the close of the last century, remarks that people were then poor in spirit and hungered for the bread of life, unlike their descendants,

who attend church to exhibit their costly wardrobes. But women of the old time were accused of the same sin. The Abbé Robin, a chaplain in Rochambeau's army during the Revolution, wrote, "Piety is not the only motive that induces American women to be constant in their attendance at church. Having no places of public amusement, no fashionable promenades, they go to church to display their fine dresses."

Instrumental music was banished from churches as a device of the Evil One, and the choir singing was fearfully and wonderfully performed. We may judge of the high esteem in which sacred music — that is, the singing of hymns — was held, from the remarks made by an old Connecticut pastor from his pulpit: "I have come into this meeting a great many times, and I saw that the devil was here. I wished to begin service, but I did not like to introduce the worship of God when the devil was in the people.

I took up the Psalm Book and read, but I could see him skipping about from pew to pew in the gallery. But the instant the chorister got up and blew the pitch-pipe he quit, and all was sobriety and decorum among the young people and children."

Fires being considered unnecessary in olden times, even when the mercury was below zero, the minister was often obliged to muffle himself to the chin. A few ladies indulged in foot-stoves, but the majority of church-goers prided themselves upon being superior to such weaknesses. In "Peter Parley's Recollections" there is an account of a bitter stove war which was waged only fifty years ago between two parties in a village church, led by the wives of the deacons. The effeminate plan for the introduction of stoves was desperately opposed, but the stove party finally conquered. The first Sunday after the stoves were put in the leader of the defeated party fainted, owing, she explained, "to the

heat of those awful stoves." Fancy her chagrin when informed that, it being a mild day, no fires had been kindled!

Indeed, in the low temperatures in which our respected ancestors lived, moved, and had their being, the cheerfulness with which they endured the chill blasts of a Northern winter is almost incredible. To be sure, there were few thermometers then to tell how cold it was. But the dwelling-houses offered numberless chinks and crannies for the north-wind to penetrate, and the immense wood-fires heated the chimneys and burned people's faces, while their backs were in Nova Zembla. Time has invested those great open fires with a romantic interest, and fancy loves to play about the shining hearth and revel in the dancing flames. We moderns build mimic fireplaces, and go to the ends of the earth to obtain a pair of old-fashioned brass andirons; then we sit before the cheery little blaze, and think what sensible old fellows our grandfathers

were. But we take extremely good care to have the furnace fires blazing away at the same time. The fires in the parlors of New England houses were rarely lighted, and nobody dreamed of warm sleeping-rooms. Why, the very mention of such a weakness would have excited the derision of a whole community. The awful solemnity of the parlor, with its straight-backed, hard-seated chairs, was only equalled by that of the "best chamber," with its great mausoleum of a bed hung round with dreary canopies, and its walls adorned with ebony profiles of the departed. Did you ever, O lover of the past, grope shivering to bed by the light of a tallow candle in that best room, in the depth of a New England winter?

But if we do not sigh for "grandmothers' houses," we must at least do justice to the women who lived in them. For they were "mighty at the spinning-wheel," manufactured their own household linen, knit as in-

defatigably as Madame De Farge, and made the most wonderful patchwork quilts. They were also skilled in fine embroidery, and wrought lace collars; and it is said the wife and beautiful daughters of President Edwards painted fans, and sent them to Boston for sale. The Dutch maidens of New Amsterdam in early times manufactured their own numberless linsey-woolsey petticoats, and the wardrobe of a lady was her only fortune. Then the best room, if we may credit Knickerbocker's reliable history, was hung round with homespun garments instead of paintings.

It is hard to believe; but even in that age of republican simplicity the wise and observing complained of the degenerate times, and looked wistfully back to a better past. A story is told of a family living in colonial times, whose extravagant habits excited the alarm of the village. "For the eldest son got a pair of boots, the second an overcoat, the third a watch, and the fourth a pair of

shoe-buckles; and the neighbors all shook their heads, and whispered to each other, 'That family is on the high-road to insolvency.'"

Legislation in New England tried to restrain extravagance in dress, and laws were passed against wearing laces, embroidery, needlework caps, and "immoderate great sleeves." It was against the law in the principal colonies for any one to indulge in personal finery who could not afford it. An old Virginia statute ran thus: "It is permitted to none but the Council and Heads of Hundreds to wear gold in their clothes, or to wear silk till they make it themselves." And a law of Massachusetts declared: "All persons not worth two hundred pounds wearing gold or silver lace, or button or blue lace above two shillings per yard, or silk hoods or scarfs, may be presented by the grand jury, and shall pay ten shillings for every offence. Every person who dresses above his rank may be

assessed at two hundred pounds." If these laws were enforced now, what a stripping off of finery there would be, and how many of us would come to grief!

A century later we find people making much the same complaints, and quoting "good old colony times." "The inhabitants prefer the splendor of wealth and the show of enjoyment to a simplicity of manners and the pure pleasures resulting therefrom," wrote M. Brissot de Warville, who landed in America in 1788; and he lamented that in republics women should sacrifice so much time to trifles. Noting the increase of bachelors, he said, "The expense of women causes matrimony to be dreaded by men." Take courage, maidens of 1876! Your grandmothers, who wore gowns woven and dyed by themselves, were also slandered. Ah! my dears, if we could have peeped into a village ball-room in New England one hundred years ago, think you we should have seen beauty unadorned, arrayed in simple

homespun alone? On the contrary, we should have seen all varieties of costume, from home-made linen and muslin gowns elaborately embroidered with the needle, to stiff brocades and damasks. Long trains were worn; here and there some daring lady sported a hoop; and the tallow candles, stuck in wooden blocks upon the walls, threw their dim rays upon the inevitable necklace of gold beads. The hair was frizzed, puffed, and powdered, arranged in towering coiffures surmounted by feathers or turbans, and ornamented with gilt and brass clasps. But these motley gatherings were faint reflections of the splendor of city assemblies, where ladies wore diamonds in their hair, and gold spangles upon their crape and velvet dresses, and where in the stately measures of the dance these old-time beauties "panted and puffed at the risk of breaking their whalebone prisons, or sinking under their heavy brocades."

The demand for hair-dressers was often so

great, before a large party, that many ladies were obliged to have their heads dressed before five or six o'clock in the morning. (This was one of the occasions on which they rose with the lark.) And the dresses worn by the belles of the Revolution were so low-necked as to excite the surprise of a French critic, who was "scandalized at this indecency among republicans."

The shoes were of the same material as the dress, often skilfully embroidered. Country girls sometimes carried the broadcloth shoes with peaked toes in their hands till they got to church; but the pink satin and yellow brocade shoes of city maidens were supported on clogs and pattens. Mrs. John Adams asked her husband to send her from Philadelphia, in 1775, "two yards of black calamanco for shoes," saying she could not wear leather if she went barefoot. However, in the country, perhaps at a somewhat later date, the travelling shoemaker was well known. Setting

up his work-bench in a corner of the great kitchen, he would spend perhaps two or three weeks in one house; and while he shod the family, he regaled his customers with all the news and gossip from far and wide.

By way of silently reproving the vanity of their wives and daughters, the sterner sex appeared in immense powdered wigs, stiffly starched ruffles, glittering knee and shoe buckles, embroidered silk waistcoats, white silk stockings, and coats of every hue but black, trimmed with great gilt or silver buttons. With these elaborate wardrobes of the men to keep in order, what wonder the women had no time to cultivate their "squirrels' brains," to quote one of the gallant croakers of the time!

For the intellectual acquirements of the women were small, and history tells us that some of the most renowned and virtuous of their number scarcely ever opened a book. "It was the fashion to ridicule female learn-

ing," wrote Mrs. John Adams; "women were engaged in domestic affairs."

But if our grandmothers did not puzzle their brains over the humanities, and were wofully ignorant of the rights of women, tradition makes them marvels of strength and vigor. Alas for tradition! Even then American women were condemned by foreigners for their early blight. The Abbé Robin wrote: "At twenty years of age the women have no longer the freshness of youth; at thirty-five or forty they are wrinkled and decrepit. The men are almost as premature."

An unprejudiced student of the ancient régime, weary of listening to the popular wail over the mysterious ill health of our women, may well point a significant finger at our tight-laced, scantily clad grandmothers, who lived in the days when thick soles and waterproofs were not, who frequented cold churches and lived in cold houses, and who endured

great physical labor, with little recreation of any kind.

After all, we fancy the most ardent lovers of the past would hardly be in favor of reviving the time-honored customs of the early days of the Republic. With the mahogany sideboard rescued from oblivion, the spinning-wheel set up in the parlor, and the quaint china tea-set upon the closet shelves, we can all cry, —

"O, those pleasant times of old, with their chivalry and state,
I love to read their chronicles which such brave deeds relate.
I love to sing their ancient rhymes, to hear their legends told, —
But Heaven be thanked I live not in those blessed times of old!"

ABOUT SPINNING-WHEELS.

THAT faithful companion of our grandmothers, the old-time spinning-wheel, was long ago consigned to oblivion. In some dark garret or remote farm-house the dust has gathered upon its venerable frame, and the spiders have woven their frail webs about its silent wheel. But by a sudden freak of fashion it has lately been restored to favor, and become a cherished ornament of the parlor. How long this ancient treasure will be numbered among our penates no one can tell; but its very presence speaks more eloquently of the past than all our Centennial orators or printed records. Anything that has survived the wear and tear of one hundred years may

lay claim to respectable antiquity; but the spindle and distaff are as old as the Egyptian monuments. To be sure, the spindle was not mounted in a frame till a comparatively recent date, for the spinning-wheel is said to have been invented in Nuremberg in 1430. But the "spinsters" of merry England knew nothing about the wheel till the time of Henry the Eighth, though it had then long been used by the Hindoos in making their far-famed muslins, those "webs of woven wind." Yet in the early ages of the world, "Go spin, you jade, go spin," was a familiar sound to both princess and peasant. Did not young Telemachus bid his royal mamma return to her spindle and loom instead of meddling with public affairs? And as long ago as the tenth century Queen Bertha of Bergundy-Transjurane used to ride about her kingdom on horseback with a distaff fastened to her saddle, spinning as she went. Hence arose the proverb, "The good old times when Bertha span."

Indeed, a woman who could not spin would hardly have been considered respectable in primitive days, and moreover it would hardly have been thought respectable for her to do anything else.

A highly educated and talented Italian woman once went to Petrarch for advice, complaining that the world said to her, "The business of a woman is to sew and spin; lay down your pen and take up the needle and distaff." That was five centuries ago, and the world has not yet become fully convinced that it is necessary for woman to educate anything but her fingers.

The selectmen of New England, in Puritan times, thought it their bounden duty to see that every girl in the village did a proper amount of spinning and weaving. England's attempt to repress American manufactures — the Earl of Chatham declaring that "the colonists had no right to manufacture as much as a horseshoe-nail" — set the spinning-wheels

whirling day and night all over the land. The society organized in New England in 1765 to repudiate foreign cloths was wonderfully popular. To insure an abundance of wool, its patriotic members agreed to eat no mutton, and to purchase no meat of any butcher who should commit the crime of killing sheep. The women formed themselves into similar associations, promising to card, spin, and weave their own clothing; and well did they keep their vows. Many of them even went into the fields to pull flax, and scutched and hackled it themselves.

In the early inventories of furniture there is no allusion to forks, but there were plenty of napkins; and this little fact points significantly to the skill and industry of the housewives of old. History records that a certain matron of the Revolution left at her death enough homespun cloth, in the shape of curtains, quilts, and garments of all sorts and patterns, to stock a village store. This person was a worthy

contemporary of Mrs. Washington; for the latter, according to her biographers, kept sixteen spinning-wheels in constant operation in her house. Two home-made cotton gowns striped with silk, which were worn by the first President's wife, were justly regarded as triumphs of skill, the silk stripes having been made from ravellings of brown silk stockings and old crimson damask chairs. Even Washington himself is said to have been arrayed in a complete suit of homespun when he arrived in New York to take the Presidential chair. Indeed, we are assured that the leading men of that era were proud of appearing in public in homespun coats and breeches; and that when women presented their husbands with clothing woven and made up by their own fair hands, "men had solid pleasures now unknown."

It was the fashion in the Colonies to have great spinning bees, or "wool-breakings." Here all the damsels in the neighborhood collected to card and spin till night, when the

young men joined them, and the gathering ended with a dance. Pianos were unknown; but the "music of ancient industry," to quote a New England historian, — the sound of the spinning-wheel whirling at the rate of fifty miles an hour, the loud beatings of the loom and dashing of the churn, quelled all discord in the family. It is said the Grecian women had a habit of spinning with the distaff as they walked; and certain elderly women in New England were wont to take their knitting-work with them when they walked abroad. We fear these industrious creatures had no eye for the wonders of the wayside, and that the click of the needles drowned the voice of nature. But then, as an old writer quaintly remarks, "Industry was a habit of female life, and it required resolution sometimes to bring it into subjection." He tells us, too, that young women, instead of talking over their conquests, then boasted of the number of hanks of thread they could spin, or the quantity of cloth they

could weave in a day on rustic looms made by their fathers or brothers. And modern maidens are boldly accused of spinning nothing but street yarn! Longfellow has given us a pretty picture of the Puritan maiden seated beside her wheel, "the carded wool like a snow-drift piled at her knee," and her foot on the treadle. But the maiden of to-day may also be seen with her foot on a treadle. The yards of cotton cloth which she rapidly turns into garments may not be so beautiful as the snowy wool, and the loud buzz of the sewing-machine may not sound as musical as the whir of Priscilla's wheel; but would n't the women of old have been glad of a sewing-machine on which to stitch the dainty ruffles of their liege lords?

The spinning-wheel and loom were inseparable companions of the early Western pioneers, and the song of the wheel was heard in the cabins of the settlers at all times and seasons. In summer the wool was spun for

winter clothing, and the flax for thin garments was spun in winter. Only a few years ago it was stated that the brown jeans — a favorite material for men's suits — were still made by the old, slow process in the rural districts of the Cumberland Valley, the art having become hereditary. And as late as 1820 women in the country towns of New England manufactured a great part of the family clothing, keeping the dye-tub in the chimney-corner. The art of dyeing was not very well understood in those primitive times, and Daniel Webster's adventure in his school-days, when he sallied out in a suit of fresh blue homespun, was the sad experience of many another youth. A sudden shower was fatal to snowy linen, for the rain soon washed the color from the coat into the shirt.

The Southern women of Revolutionary times were very much troubled by depredations of Indians and Tories, who not only helped themselves to all the clothing they

could find, but even stole cloth from the looms, and many of the sufferers were at their wits' end to know how to keep their families in trim. Some of them made a rough loom between four trees in the forest, and there secretly worked in pleasant weather, covering the loom and web with cow-skins when it rained. And the poorest but most ingenious matrons gathered the beautiful silk of the milkweed and spun it with flax for garments.

The descendants of those Southern women have proved themselves as fertile in expedients as their grandmothers, and spinning-wheels have been better known of late years at the South than in any other part of the country. Before the war they were often seen in the houses of the small planters, kept in constant motion by the negro women, who spun yarns of cotton, flax, and wool. Many of the older women were very accomplished spinners, while others did the carding, the doubling and twisting, and making into skeins. These yarns

were woven into cloth for the slaves, who were furnished with new garments at Christmas and at one other time during the year. The planters' proud wives and accomplished daughters often cut homespun suits for days together, which the slave women afterward made up into garments. But during the war the spinning-wheels all over the South had a new lease of life, for not only the slaves, but their owners, must be clothed, and the few factories at the South could do little toward supplying the immense demand for clothing. The forest trees and shrubs yielded dyes, as in earlier days, and delicate ladies were obliged to learn how to spin, dye, and weave. In those industrious Southern homes the mournful whir of the spinning-wheel was the first sound which greeted one's ears in the morning, and the last at night. The spinning was done in the dining-room, and in the kitchen the clumsy old-fashioned loom was kept. Here were turned out the heavy jeans for the men, the plain un-

bleached homespun, and the checked, plaided, and striped goods which formed the clothing of the women. "I well remember my pleasure," says a Southern lady, "when I had two new homespun dresses. A calico seemed almost as unattainable as a silk."

Everything was cut and made in the family, and there was no sewing-machine to lighten the labor. We dwellers north of Mason and Dixon's line have little conception of the devices to which those Southern women were driven. From the undyed wool of black sheep a thread was spun which they knit into gloves, and ladies cut up their old black silk dresses, relics of happier days, and ravelled out the pieces. Then some deft old aunty carded the silk with white cotton and spun it: the result, a gray, silky thread, was knit into pretty and strong gloves.

Those days which so sorely tried men's (and women's) souls are happily dead; but the spinning-wheel deserves immortality.

We laugh at the zeal of our wives and daughters in reviving this outgrown thing of the past; for it seems as sadly out of place in our modern houses, and just as helpless amid our bustling ways of life, as would some high-born, delicate lady who had been reared in a nunnery, should she come in the garb of two or three centuries ago, her beautiful embroidery in hand, to take up her abode with us.

Perchance a century hence the sewing-machine will look as antiquated to the critical eyes of our descendants as the spinning-wheel looks to ours. But our noisy machine is a fit production of this noisy age, and even time can never throw about it the atmosphere of poetry which envelops the dainty wheel. To be sure, the spinning-wheel has accomplished its mission; but there it stands, a perpetual reminder of the industry, ingenuity, thrift, and patience of women in all ages and countries.

OUR LITERARY CLUB.

THE Boston State House casts its benignant shadow over many towns, and a true son of the Hub is nothing if not literary. The very conductors on the railroads give occasional lectures in suburban halls to the delight and instruction of their audiences.

I accosted one of these popular officials on his rounds through the cars one day, and asked him about his favorite books. "I 've read Dickens and Wilkie Collins and all those," he replied, "(tickets, please,) but ah! none of 'em can come up to the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' That 's fascinating."

One cannot live long within a dozen miles

of Athens, — I allude to the modern Athens, — and not see the propriety of doing as the Athenians do. So it happened, one winter evening, that we — a small party of ladies and gentlemen — met together in solemn conclave to improve our minds, or, as a jeering outsider remarked, to "get cultured up." How to do it was the question. One of our number, a lady with a gentle, sensible face, proposed to study modern authors; but it was voted that, though entertaining, the writers of the present century were not instructive. A young woman who had seen some twenty-five summers, and who had lately returned from Europe, wanted to study art; to get into an "art wave" she declared the end and aim of her being. "Most of us are too young to have original ideas about anything," she said. "If we were old and knew everything, it would be different. As it is, we must have some subject we can 'study up' on."

Miss Fogg was anxious to consider Milton.

"He writes in such a heavenly way about angels and things," she said in a gush of enthusiasm.

The young man with hands in his pockets, who sat next me in a chair tilted back on two legs, whispered that Miss Fogg was a genius, and wrote for the magazines. This youth suggested the government of the United States as an interesting study, and something about which most people were deplorably ignorant, but was at once frowned down.

"As you will not let us vote, we are content with our superficial knowledge," cried the ladies.

It was finally decided that we should discuss English literature from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Now I was not reared under the shadow of the State House, and at first a painful sense of my own ignorance kept me silent. But when Sir Thomas Moore was under consideration, some one said, "Let me see, he wrote the Irish ballads, did n't

he?" And in a little talk with Miss Fogg about our mutual admiration for Dr. Holmes, she remarked that she always did like "Prue and I." After that I began to take courage.

As the winter wore on, we wandered widely from the path marked out. The conversation ranged in one short hour from Sir Walter Raleigh to the Polar Sea; from the Italian Improvisatore to discussions on ethics. The young ladies took their tatting, it was so much easier to keep awake when they had work, they said.

I don't know how we drifted back to the twelfth century, but we were at the mercy of a fickle breeze. For long after we had buried Lord Bacon, we unearthed "My Cid"; and from the old quaint story of his heroic deeds we came back to America and John Brown.

So our inquiring minds flitted from Jeremy Taylor to northern mythology; from pantheism to the most approved method of cooking

beefsteak. But although one of the ladies described the *modus operandi*, we never understood how a ball of butter could be roasted on a spit, or decided satisfactorily whether the farthingales which old Hugh Latimer condemned as vanities were identical with the hoops of the present day. At one of the last meetings, when Leibnitz was "up," some of the gentlemen ventured on to dangerous ground. Their earnest dispute about the nature of monads excited now frivolous, now sarcastic remarks from the ladies. The closing hour, ten o'clock, found them hopelessly floundering in the mire of Pre-established Harmony. That was the only time I ever saw patient Mr. Straw excited; but the levity of the ladies had exasperated the little man almost to the verge of rudeness. For he complained, after the meeting broke up, that it was useless to talk metaphysics in a club like that. And when I mildly suggested that such abstruse subjects did not interest most

ladies, he sharply exclaimed, "Why can't they stop their chatter then?" (Mr. Straw was a learned man who had kindly come from the city to conduct our discussions.)

After that night our Literary Club languished. The young ladies had dropped off, one by one, long before; and our one young man now followed. At the last meeting the only persons present were Mr. Straw and myself. We stared helplessly at each other several minutes, — then adjourned the club *sine die.*

THE MISERY OF IT.

"THE true secret of happiness," said a certain wise old lady, "is always to have a little less time than one wants, and a little more money than one needs."

Now, why should n't that large class of people who are commonly called "comfortably off," always have a little more money than they need? And how many of their own neighbors suspect that the phrase "comfortably off" is too often only a pleasing fiction, and that clouds and darkness, invisible to outsiders, hang over their devoted homes? As long as money lasts it flows freely, and people enjoy the beautiful things it can buy, after the manner of the careless grasshoppers.

Ah! if every man's purse were like the miraculous pitcher of Hawthorne's tale, and were constantly replenished by unseen hands, from unknown sources, he might safely take no thought for the morrow. But by and by the coffers are empty; now, what becomes of our improvident friends? Do they sell their big houses and move into smaller ones, curtail expenses, adopt self-denial for the family motto, and live like poor people, not like rich ones? Nothing of the sort; their credit is good, and they can easily borrow the money for present emergencies. This done, all goes on as before, till more bills come pouring in; till the interest on the mortgaged house or land becomes due; or till a note some trusting friend has indorsed becomes payable. Then comes a terrible struggle to get into smooth water again without any one's suspecting that the poor creatures were so near drowning. In some households these private panics are periodical. This is the misery of it, — the

misery of keeping up appearances. "I would rather live in a hovel," said a bright young girl to me, "and have nothing to worry about, than to go through these dreadful times, never knowing how it will all end."

We love luxury, — it is grateful to the senses; but let us ask our inmost souls whether the game is worth the candle. To live in a handsome, well-furnished house is an undeniably comfortable thing in itself; and it is natural enough to want to dress as well and as fashionably as our neighbors and friends. Indeed, Emerson quotes a lady as declaring — Heaven save the mark! — that "the sense of being perfectly well-dressed gives a feeling of inward tranquillity which religion is powerless to bestow." The author of "A Plea for Extravagance," in a late number of the Woman's Journal, is doubtless of the same mind. She thinks our "present ways of living are ruinous, simply because they are so narrow and penurious," and that every American

woman should be queen in a small way, and enjoy prosperities and luxuries now beyond her reach.

Is it, then, an established fact that a people's happiness increases with its possessions? Irving speaks of the great change in the character of our British cousins since the introduction of commerce, and notes the decline of that free and joyous spirit which gave the country its old title of "Merrie England." "England's gayest customs," he says, "prevailed at times when her common people enjoyed comparatively few of the comforts and conveniences which they do at present."

So true it is that the over-anxiety and haste of us moderns to "get up in the world" bring in their train hosts of devouring cares. The evil habit of shirking our responsibilities, and sacrificing everything to making a good appearance, is gnawing at the root of the whole body politic. For we see this lack of fine moral sensitiveness in public as well as pri-

vate life. Unfortunately, the recent frauds of high officials were not needed to open our eyes. Our easy-going friends intend to pay their debts some time; so does the government. But in the mean time it spends thousands of dollars on some needless extravagance which may flatter the national ambition, or contribute to its glory. Year after year Mr. Sumner called the attention of Congress to the unpaid French claims; and his appeals had as much effect upon that honorable body as the petitions to wind up the famous case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce had in the Court of Chancery. Dickens's words, with very slight alteration, would apply equally well to these long-pending debts of the government. "The little plaintiff or defendant who was promised a new rocking-horse when Jarndyce and Jarndyce should be settled, has grown up, possessed himself of a real horse, and trotted away into the other world."

Look at our splendid palaces of trade, and

then across the water at the small, dingy, two-story brick building where the great bankers, Baring Brothers, have their headquarters! Our showy castles have no solid foundation; what wonder that they topple over?

After all, it is only our seeming needs that increase so fast. Thoreau said, "My greatest skill has been to want but little." During a recent visit at the far West, nothing, not even the curious, cramped ways of living, struck me with such surprise as everybody's frankness in confessing his or her poverty. What we consider bare necessaries were to them unattained luxuries. Everybody was poor, everybody worked hard, nobody spent a penny unless he had it to spend. Yet they were not behindhand in joyous merrymakings, and all seemed happy in their sturdy independence. Shall we, the children of a free country, always be cowardly slaves to opinion, in wretched bondage to appearances? Shall we ever dare disappoint that august personage,

Mrs. Grundy, by bravely living within our means?

It was a beautiful fable of the ancients that when the first beams of the rising sun fell upon the statue of Memnon, it uttered a strain of music. In these prosaic days God's sunshine falls across the paths of mortals, but they are too often unresponsive, or utter only harsh and discordant sounds. We cannot too earnestly cry, with our sweet-voiced Quaker poet,

> "Take from our lives the strain and stress,
> And let our ordered lives confess
> The beauty of thy peace."

UP THE MISSISSIPPI.

A MIDSUMMER'S trip on the Mississippi River is one long, idle dream. The ladies who frequent the cabin of the steamer find their only amusement in change of toilet; and she who appears at the breakfast-table in a loose wrapper and short hair will scarcely be recognized at noon in her flounces and curls and gay ribbons. The children on board develop a frightful capacity for eating, and emerge from the good-natured cook's domains at all hours of the day, with their mouths and hands full of cake.

But he who shuns the atmosphere of the cabin may spend day after day in a shady nook of the pilot-house, with an open book before

him, and hardly know whether he is in the body or not. The boat gracefully sweeps around the abrupt bends in this incredibly crooked river, and floats by tangled forests whose luxuriant growth seems almost tropical. Sometimes a glittering serpent swims across the river, and from the bank comes the drowsy hum of the locusts. Great lumber-rafts float down the stream with their little houses for the raftsmen. Groups of wretched Indians sun themselves upon the banks, or idly plash about in their canoes. Anon the steamer passes between hazy bluffs with queer little villages climbing their craggy sides. The boat makes slow progress, for the water is low and the sand-bars treacherous. Then long tarries are made at the landings, where the miserable deck-hands trudge monotonously back and forth, laden with bags of wheat. At night everything is still more unreal. The landings are made by the wild, fitful light of the steamer's torches; and as

the boat moves off again, the smoke-stack sends out showers of fiery sparks which whirl a moment in mid-air, and then are quenched in the dark river. And still in the warm sunlight, or under the stars, the Father of Waters tranquilly sleeps.

One must see the tumult of the waters between Minneapolis and St. Anthony to know what fierce unrest is theirs before they gain the calm below; for there the waters of this same placid river "roll and leap and roar and tumble all day long." The principal falls or rapids of St. Anthony have lost the wild beauty which they once had. For it was discovered that the stone in the river was fast wearing away, and an "apron" was put in to preserve the water-power. The water slides smoothly down this planked descent, and strikes the rocks at its foot with tremendous force. All about the falls in every direction the water dashes over huge bowlders, and leaps from the rocks in foaming cascades. A

certain large slab on the edge of the rapids is painfully conspicuous; this bears a staring advertisement in red letters of "O. K. Saleratus."

It was on Hennepin Island, which lies in the middle of the river, that the futile attempt was once made to dig a tunnel. The water broke in and threatened to tear up the very island, and carry it, with all its mills, down the river. Immense blocks of stone were broken from the ledge by the rebellious water, and their corners are as square as if hewn from the solid rock by the hand of man.

One day in the pleasant "moon of strawberries," we drove from the beautiful city of Minneapolis to the Falls of Minnehaha, over a road as smooth and level as a floor. The carriage stopped unexpectedly in a grove of oaks. "Do you hear it 'calling to you through the silence'?" said a friend, as we alighted. We listened and obeyed the call. We had taken a few steps when suddenly,

through the branches of the trees, we saw the falls. Too much surprised and moved to speak, we stood as if spellbound. It was not Minnehaha as it is represented in pictures that we saw, — no tame, smoothly flowing sheet of water. Minnehaha Creek runs foaming and bubbling over its rocky bed, then

"Laughs, and leaps into the valley."

As the sparkling water takes its leap it separates into a myriad of tiny globules, which whirl, and dance, and "flash and gleam," and dissolve in mist as they come down.

In order to appreciate the beauty and truth of Longfellow's description it is necessary to see the cataract, — which the poet himself never saw! To be sure, travellers sometimes contemptuously shrug their shoulders when they see Minnehaha; but such persons are sure to be "disappointed" in Niagara.

Most of our party were content with one look at Minnehaha. The ladies said it was

beautiful; the gentlemen sighed over the unavailable water-power; then, having done their duty, they retired out of sight and hearing of the falls, to sit under an awning and drink lemonade. A young man sat on one of the rustic seats overlooking the falls, alternately studying the cataract and writing on his knee. And a group of young men and women were having their pictures taken by an artist who had established himself under a tree, half-way down the bank. This party watched us with surprise as we followed the narrow winding path to the foot of the falls, where a rainbow arches the stream. Carefully treading the slippery ledge, we gained the hollowed cliff behind the falls. A cooling cloud of spray drove in upon us; the cataract's laughter was hoarse and deep; and through the sheet of falling water we looked out to the green trees and sunlight beyond.

A shrill whistle, a hurried last look, and the cars whirled us away.

We may never revisit the green solitude where Minnehaha pours its bright waters, but their music, once heard, can never be forgotten. The Fates forbid that Laughing Water should ever turn a mill-wheel. Its province is to make man glad, and thrill him with its beauty evermore.

PRAIRIE LIFE.

I.

WE first trod Minnesota soil at Red Wing, that bewildering little town among the bluffs where so many nationalities are represented, and where handsome churches, lager-beer saloons, and all varieties of dwelling-houses are jumbled together in hopeless confusion. But we gladly said farewell to Barn Bluff, where rests the Indian chief who gave his name to the town, and took up our line of march for the prairies, the straw stables and log cabins with thatched roofs looking very strange to our unaccustomed eyes as we passed through the straggling suburbs. Too many of the Western towns have a look of premature

decay, as if they had spent their youth in riotous living. Many of the houses — huts, we should call them — by the wayside have a tumble-down, poverty-stricken air. The small way-stations are genuine mushroom towns brought into existence by the railroad, and anxious to maintain an appearance of business. When you have seen one you have seen them all, — a station-house, an elevator, half a dozen battlement front stores, and as many more dwelling-houses built after the sham style of New Jersey. In our journeyings through the Gopher State we came upon a thrifty little village surrounded by rolling prairie, which reminded us of New England. Here we pitched our tent for the winter; for as long as doctors recommend the climate of Minnesota to invalids, so long the poor deluded creatures will flee thither. What a winter it was! Now and then a cold snap would come; everything eatable was frozen; ears and noses did not always escape; farmers drove loads of

wheat to market with their heads muffled in blankets and skins; the sun-dogs kept guard by day in the cold sky, and by night the paler moon-dogs took their place. No wild creatures stirred abroad except the rabbits, though once or twice we caught a glimpse of a startled deer or wolf bounding through the snow. Anon the sun shone warm, the snow melted till the roads were full of running water, the air was soft, the blue-jays clamored among the fallen acorns before our door, and the prairie-chickens gleaned among last year's oats. More sudden changes were never witnessed in maligned New England; and when a consumptive friend wrote, "The doctor recommends Minnesota; what do you advise?" an old settler said, "Tell her to stay at home; tell her the climate 's a humbug." And I did.

Disappointed in the climate, there were so many other things to interest us that we forgave our well-meaning Esculapius for sending us to the Western wilds. We were living in

a little world within itself, where hardly an echo of the busy stir of life outside ever penetrated. The mere fact that we had come from the East insured us a warm welcome from the villagers, who all cherished the one bright dream of going East before they died. Among the strange presents which came to us from our kind neighbors were great cakes of frozen milk wrapped in newspaper. We were rather disappointed at not being presented with a sorrel-pie, for that was supposed to be a favorite article of diet with one family, and a flourishing plantation of the sour weed near the house seemed to confirm the belief.

On the anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims and the settlement of their little village, our friends gave an oyster-supper in the town hall. A neighbor of ours who had emigrated from Boston some years before, and who had been extremely unfortunate, declined to take any part in the supper, designating

both events which the villagers proposed to celebrate as "bad jobs"; while his wife, who pined for her old home, declared that she had nothing to look forward to but the grave. In striking contrast to this homesick pair comes to mind an old lady who lived with her son in a neat, pretty house, but who mourned the ruder life of other years. She walked several miles over the prairie one day till she saw a log hut which suited her ideas of home. There she took up her quarters for the day, telling her astonished hostess how glad she was to "get away from style!" Her son had taken away her spinning-wheel and built a new house, and life was a burden.

The Norwegian church was a picturesque feature in the landscape, and a glance within some Sunday morning transported one to the old country. The black-gowned minister exhorted his flock in a foreign tongue, and on the wooden benches before him were ranged the peasant men and women of the North.

The Norwegians in that vicinity live in the poorest little huts thatched with straw. One room accommodates a family, and the floor is merely the ground strewn with hay. In such a house no sweeping is required, and the evils of house-cleaning are unknown. But the Norwegians are an industrious, money-making people, and not a few of them have become rich farmers and owners of handsome houses.

Most of the house and farm servants belong to this class of foreigners, and in time they make very good "help," however hard it may be at first to make them understand the propriety of washing or baking oftener than once a year. It was an endless source of amusement to watch these sturdy, rough-looking people, dressed in the curious garb of the "old country," as they came to the village store with the products of their farms to exchange for groceries. They brought tender chickens at five cents a pound, eggs at six cents a dozen, and fresh butter marvellously

cheap, but tied up, I am bound to say, in the dingiest of handkerchiefs. Their dialect was wonderful to hear, and they puzzled the thin-visaged tradesman by asking for "raisin-grain" (which meant rice) and other incomprehensibles, till, as one of them said, "it was reason to get mad" so often, that a Norwegian clerk was employed to wait upon his countrymen.

But several miles farther west lay a beautiful farming country settled entirely by Norwegians; this was called the largest Norse settlement in America. The houses were large, well-built, and occupied by wealthy farmers. With a pleasure-party from our village we visited one of these homes. The parlor windows were filled with beautiful plants, and among the blossoms little colored tapers were fastened. The mantel-piece was covered with black enamelled cloth on which were sewed innumerable porcelain buttons of various colors. An English ivy and strings

of pop-corn were twined together over a trellis; pop-corn and shells were glued to brackets; worsted flowers, curiously wrought, adorned the walls; and crosses of all sorts and sizes met the eye. In the middle of the room stood a large handsome piano, on which one of the Norwegian ladies, with a good deal of diffidence, performed. Even more unique in its arrangements was the dining-room, where we were quite unexpectedly summoned to refresh the inner man. On the table were dishes of canned fruit, and a number of wineglasses which our host proceeded to fill with the juice of the grape. Never shall I forget the distress, the blank dismay depicted on the faces of those hospitable foreigners, who could neither speak nor understand a word of English, when the ruddy wine was passed to their guests; for the ungracious descendants of the Puritans solemnly shook their heads and put their hands behind them.

As spring advanced, it seemed to us idle

lookers-on that an inexorable law of work held every one in its iron grasp. The farmers' wives worked like slaves. Besides their own families and the hired men to provide for, new land was occasionally broken, and then there were a dozen "breakers" to feed. It was no unusual thing to see women striding over the furrows driving a "seeder" or harrow, though they were often foreigners in peasant dress. Even young American girls earn large wages by driving "harvesters" during the busiest season. With many of the farmers no recreation relieves the wear and tear. The result is seen in people whose minds have been dwarfed and stunted by the incessant drain on physical strength, and strong men breaking down in the prime of manhood. How quickly, to quote a Western college professor, "the real kicks over the pail of the creamy ideal"!

At a Western hotel I once encountered a "school committee-man" who took a deep in-

terest in all possible teachers. What a New England girl could be "way out West" for, unless it were to teach school, he was puzzled to understand. And my idleness was destined to excite still more surprise. A young farmer asked me to go coasting one wintry afternoon. As we walked up a long icy slope, a man driving an ox-team passed and gave us "a lift." He looked at us curiously as we dismounted, and inquired if we "hauled all those rocks down there." When informed that we were sliding for mere amusement, like two children, the man could not believe it. He stared, he winked, he actually gasped for breath. Then a sense of the ludicrous seemed to come over him with irresistible force. His amazed expression gave way to a twinkle of humor, which lighted up the hard lines of his brown face, and he drove off, laughing at the top of his voice. My companion, remarking that I did not seem to "sense it," explained that the man thought we had selected a site

for a house and were hauling stones for the foundation!

But to make a home in those distant wilds is truly no light matter. "Let me tell you how I pre-empted my quarter-section," said a prairie farmer to me. "I dug a hole in the ground and put up a little shanty over it, and slept there two nights. But though I wore my great-coat and hat and was wrapped in a quilt, it was fearfully cold, and I felt as if I were buried alive. Afterwards I ate crackers and cheese there two or three times, so to say I had lived there."

"What dreadful times you pioneers had! And is the West still your Eldorado?" I said.

"Ask my wife," said the farmer, proudly.

His wife was a gentle, bright-eyed woman for whom the freedom and excitement of life on the frontier had an indescribable charm. She had formerly lived in New Ulm, a town on the Minnesota River settled by Germans,

and very unlike the staid little farming village on the prairie where her husband brought her. Life does not wear so stern an aspect to the light-hearted Germans as it presents to our own conscientious, care-worn people, even when they have wandered so many leagues from home to pitch their tents in the wilderness. And so they have their beer-gardens in which to while away the summer afternoons, bands of music to play the airs sacred to Fatherland, and gay dances in vine-wreathed summer-houses. Many of the New Ulmites claim to be exiled noblemen. It is said that most of them are sceptics, and that before the Indian massacre of 1862 they burned Christ in effigy. Soon afterwards the whole town was burned and laid waste by the Indians. My farmer's wife had often watched the savages in their wild scalp-dances, could talk with Chippewas and Dacotahs in their own tongue, and had even learned to sing their guttural chants and cruel war-songs.

When the little German town was sacked (people said it was a judgment from Heaven), she had to flee for her life. But she was always ready to declare that she did not see how any one could live at the East.

"You may talk about your superior culture and other Boston notions," continued the farmer, helping himself to plum-cake, which luxury his wife indulged him in once a year, — at harvest-time, — "but the smartest people are in the West. Give me enough to eat, and I don't care for the larnin."

The first assertion is a familiar one, and never creates surprise in the minds of the few who realize what it is to "open up" a new country, and who know that every added advantage, social or educational, instead of being handed down from remote generations, is coined out of somebody's very life. The last declaration was a libel on the speaker himself as well as on the country of his adoption, for nowhere is such a general interest

taken in education as in those far-off Western towns. So much pride is felt in the schools, that the last day of the term is a sort of holiday. The school-rooms are filled with spectators, and the women remove their bonnets and take out their knitting-work, prepared to spend the day. Any occasion that will bring people together is made much of, and so the indispensable lumber-wagons are called into frequent requisition. Nobody thinks of walking on the prairies, and indeed few ride for the sake of riding, the roads are so bad. Mrs. Somerville, in her "Personal Recollections," speaks of an Edinburgh woman who had the disagreeable habit of looking through a spy-glass into her neighbors' houses. I know a woman on the prairie who took great comfort in the possession of such a glass. Her nearest neighbors lived a mile or two away, but the consciousness that she could visit them at any time by the aid of her powerful glass did much to dispel a feeling of loneliness and

isolation. She thus kept herself acquainted with all that was going on in the village, and displayed a minute knowledge of distant transactions which seemed little short of marvellous, and was not altogether palatable to sensitive persons who lived within the range of her vision. But as her observations were not prompted by idle curiosity, or regarded by her in any other light than that of an innocent and laudable amusement, nobody ventured to protest. Queer little discoveries the spy-glass sometimes made, — as of the curious disposition a certain family made of cats. I have read of a Scotch woman whose love for cats was so great that she kept in her house no less than eighty-six living ones and twenty-eight stuffed ones in glass cases. But our prairie friends had a different motive for cultivating the society of cats. They raised an incredible number of these domestic animals, but no sooner had they attained a proper size than off came their "jackets," which were

manufactured into warm robes or coverlids. So many cats were a source of discomfort to their owner, for she could not go out to make a call or do an errand without being attended by a rear-guard of irrepressible pussies. I was told that in early pioneer times mittenless boys wore upon their hands the skins of small kittens. First settlers forego many comforts, but their Yankee wit serves them in good stead, and they are fertile in expedients.

Horses and cattle are allowed to run loose on the prairie to the severe detriment of the rail-fences which are built with much labor, and the farmer is liable to be aroused at any time of day or night by the cry of "Cattle in the grain!" Sometimes the lightning tears out the rails more effectually than the marauding cattle. The thunder-storms are long and terrific; the little houses rattle hour after hour, and the tremendous peals make even stout hearts quake. The lightning takes strange freaks, and I have known it to run down a

stove-pipe and fill the pots on the stove full of holes the size of peas.

One night it struck a house where a physician was watching by the bedside of a patient. The electric fluid came down the chimney, took off the back of the stove, and tore a large hole in the floor. The room seemed all aflame ; but in an instant every light in the house was extinguished, and the doctor and his patient were left for a few seconds quite rigid and powerless. But the lightning is not always so harmless, and horses are often killed by a deadly flash ; a loss felt the more because Minnesota is "a hard country on horses." The climate does not seem adapted to their need, and they require the greatest care. In the winter they are often seen standing motionless in the farm-yards, their heads and shoulders hidden in the great straw-stacks. They eat their way into the stacks, which thus furnish them with both food and shelter.

Frost-storms may not be peculiar to the

West, but I have never seen anything so beautiful in any other part of the country. Even there they are rarely seen, but one brilliant winter morning I went out and found the crisp air full of the most exquisite, glittering particles of frost. The familiar saying, "He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes," was henceforth clothed with new meaning. Freshets occur frequently. Then the tiny streams which are dignified by the name of rivers, and which ordinarily pursue their winding way so quietly that one scarcely knows of their existence, become, in the twinkling of an eye, raging torrents. The water rises in volumes, and the bridges, put up with so much labor and expense, are anxiously watched. But the remorseless flood often sweeps them away, and washes over acres of newly planted land. Then the mystery of the heavy bridges which look so strangely out of place on the dry prairie is explained, for the "dry runs" beneath them become rushing streams. One

such freshet is indelibly impressed upon my memory. Three impatient men attempted with a team to ford the swollen river which ran through our green valley. But the swift current bore away the horses, and after long clinging with despairing fingers to the wagon-box which continually turned over and over in the rushing water, the men were rescued by a boat. When the water subsided, the little river carelessly loitered through its beautiful banks. In its clear depths no traces of the storm were visible; only blue sky and fleecy clouds were reflected there, and bending trees with birds flying among the branches; and the treacherous stream almost persuaded us that no greater ripple had ever disturbed its tranquil breast than that caused by the plashing ducks and their shy broods of ducklings, or the dip of a passing oar. The river was hardly a feature of beauty in the landscape, for it was entirely hidden at a distance by the trees which bordered its

banks. But when, in the early summer, we floated down the stream, it seemed a very dream of beauty. The wild apple and plum blossomed on the banks, and the currant-bush hung its pale clusters over the water. Wild-flowers of many hues grew on both sides of the narrow stream, and grapevines hung in festoons from the branching elms. Sometimes the harsh scream of the wild-cat startled us, or we listened to the plaintive note of the whippoorwill. As if to recompense man for the hardships he must undergo in those Western wilds, Nature is everywhere lavish of beauty. Rich groves of oak and elm are scattered over the prairie slopes, and birds of most brilliant plumage flash in and out of the branches. The various sorts of grain can be distinguished for miles by the different shades of green. Under my window the thrushes and meadow-larks sang duets every morning; and once a strange songster flew into an old oak before the open

door, and sang a most ravishing accompaniment to the music of the piano. When all was quiet in the yard the pretty wild rabbits amused themselves by darting in and out of the croquet-wickets, with far more enjoyment than is displayed by the usual devotees of that game.

In the early spring, when the wild grass is still dry and brown, and the prairie is covered with the purple frost-flowers, the gophers open their sleepy eyes and come forth from their dark chambers underground to enjoy the sunshine. They can be seen in every direction, frisking over the ground, or standing erect and motionless, as if to discover with their bright round eyes what changes have befallen the world since they bade it good night. In the latter position it is impossible to distinguish them at a distance from so many brown twigs; but the slightest noise sends them scampering to their burrows, where they disappear with a shrill chirp and a comical

flourish of their feet. In the West these little creatures take the place of the tree-squirrel, living on hazel-nuts, roots, and seeds of prairie plants. The prettiest and most common of the prairie-squirrels is the leopard spermophile, or striped gopher, a slender animal whose fur is beautifully spotted and striped. As much as I admired this little beauty, I was extremely annoyed by his habit of digging holes in my flower-beds, thus uprooting the tender plants. While I carefully repaired the mischief, he was industriously at work in another part of the garden; and perching himself near a freshly made hole, ready to dive in at a moment's notice, he would look exultingly at me with his saucy brown eyes. I would never consent to have him shot, and so he kept me busy through the season.

The gray gopher is too much like a rat to be pretty; and the pocket-gopher, though an ugly creature in appearance, is a nocturnal animal, and seldom seen.

One of the first difficulties farmers have to contend with is the gopher. Every man is armed with shot-gun and ammunition for outward application, and a bottle of strychnine with which he loads kernels of corn for inner treatment. It is not uncommon to kill thirty gophers on a three-acre patch in one day. "On a new piece of ground and with a green Yankee to plant it," said my farmer friend with a sly twinkle in his eye, "the gopher will commence digging as the Yankee commences planting, follow him all day, and before night get from one to three rows ahead of him, digging up every kernel of corn, merely taking out the chit and leaving the hard part to show where he has been."

In some localities shooting gophers is as important a part of the farmer's work as "bugging" potatoes. As soon as the green shoots appear in the cornfields, the little ravagers dig them up to eat off the kernels; while the pocket-gopher sometimes kills fruit trees of

many years' growth by gnawing the roots. This is very trying to gardeners, for fruit is not easily raised in the newer portions of the West. I shall not soon forget a desperate young friend who stood motionless in his garden one whole summer afternoon, with his rifle aimed at a pocket-gopher's hole. His patience was not rewarded, for the little miscreant had no idea of being shot. The pocket-gopher is as fond of potatoes as an Irishman, and burrows under the hills, where he can eat them at his leisure. Thus with the greedy potato-bugs above ground and the pouched rat underneath, the farmer has a hard time raising his potatoes.

The hot sun and rich soil make the weeds grow rampant, and if Mr. Warner had lived in Minnesota he would have had no time to write his "Summer in a Garden." It is said that when a forest is burned down, a certain weed springs up from the ashes, and grows like the fabled beanstalk till it is as tall as

the trees were. So it is called the fire-weed, and it is one of the rankest weeds that ever dared to lift its head among the growing grain. As if there were not enough weeds native to the soil, some early settler introduced "pusley" from the East; for though not a Chinaman, he was fond of greens. And the "pusley" takes kindly to the prairie soil, and grows there more luxuriantly than it ever can, thank Heaven, in the rocky soil of New England. When spring came round the settlers' wives missed the bright familiar faces of the dandelions, and sent home for seeds. But the prairie winds wafted the seeds far and wide, and they sprung up in the wheat-fields, to the sore annoyance of the farmers.

The sudden appearance on the prairie of the strawberry-vine is as marvellous as the growth of the fire-weed. The strawberry-vine is not a native of Minnesota, but when a piece of wild land is broken and left undisturbed for a year, the second season finds it covered with strawberry-plants.

The absence of evergreens causes the country in winter to look bare to an Eastern eye; and at Christmas-time no trees or decorations can be had for love or money. All sorts of expedients are resorted to by the few who have time to observe the Christmas holidays; and on one occasion a family procured a native tree, and pasted green paper over the bare limbs. In St. Paul I saw little fir-trees for sale, in flower-pots, like choice hothouse plants.

II.

"YOU 'LL never go back to the East to live after seeing this country!" cried our jolly pilot, whose name should have been Mark Tapley. I 've been on this river twenty-two years," he continued, turning his wheel as he talked, and narrowly watching the bluffs that he might keep in the channel, "and I 'm poorer now than when I began." Then, while we slowly toiled up the Mississippi, our progress much retarded by the heavy barges of wheat in tow, he told us in rough language, but with great good-humor, of his mishaps. He had been blown up on one of the river boats; he was severely wounded in the Indian war;

he had been down with the typhoid fever; he had built a nice house only to see it burn to the ground; but he ended this list of his dire experiences with the emphatic declaration, "The West is the place for me!"

Everywhere we met deserters from the Pine Tree State, and at length we began to credit the statement that the principal use of Maine railroads is to facilitate emigration to the West. While the mere fact of coming "from the old State, you know," was sufficient passport to favor, it was plain that these sons and daughters of New England had transferred their whole allegiance to the fair new State which the Indians well named Minnesota, "land of sky-tinted water." I will not ignore the old couple who, after "roughing it" on a Western farm for a year, hastened back to Massachusetts where they could have "privileges and things"; or the discontented friend, who, when some one remarked that the poem of Hiawatha must be read in the land of the

Dacotahs to be appreciated, bitterly responded that he wished the Dacotahs had kept the land. But the unhappy mortals who pine for the fleshpots of Egypt are few, and meet with little sympathy from their sturdier brethren. They have been tried and found wanting; for no one is deemed worthy to share the trials and glories of the Promised Land who cannot, to use the favorite Hoosier expression originally applied to the prairie winds, "get up and howl."

Many people go West to repair shattered health or fortunes, and in the farming localities all classes are represented. Eastern merchants, professional men, mechanics, and farmers join hands in subduing the wilderness. They go from the hillsides of New England with a pride of birthplace which is never lost. Yet they feel a certain degree of superiority over those who have not the enterprise to leave their narrow chances at the East, and create homes and names for themselves in

the great West. In view of the difficulties all first settlers have to encounter — the sore trials, the weary heart-aches — before they can feel that they are established in the land, they may well be proud of their achievements. It is only a few years since they were cast adrift on the prairie, with no houses to shelter them, no wood nor water, no provisions, and too often no money. A Western hotel in those pioneer days beggars description. A log-cabin with one room and a loft accommodated thirty or forty men. They climbed into the loft by the logs of the house; and while the wolves howled dismally without, slept soundly on "prairie feathers," or prairie hay spread upon the floor. The lower room could not always boast of a floor, and stray "feathers" had an uncomfortable way of falling through the great cracks in the loft upon the breakfast-table beneath. For such a life the settlers had left all the comforts of a New England home. In the depths of a Minnesota winter,

the mercury often 30° or 40° below zero, the men enveloped themselves, after the Indian fashion, in red, blue, and green blankets, leaving only a loop-hole for the eyes, and scoured the country on horseback. Or, tired of living on salt pork, they strapped on huge Norwegian snow-shoes, and went through the deep snows in pursuit of game. In summer the snow-shoes were exchanged for high, stout boots; for there were weary miles to travel through tall, wiry grass, which cut trousers and ordinary boots to pieces in a trice, and, moreover, rattlesnakes lurked in the prairie grass. The farmers picked up and hauled away, not stones, but countless loads of oak "grubs," which they use for fuel. In turning the sod the sharp plough cuts off the oak trees or bushes which the yearly fires keep always small and stunted, and the harrow drags the great roots or "grubs" to the surface. Then they fenced in their forty-acre fields, sharpening and nailing split hard-wood rails till their hands and

arms were so scratched and lacerated that the pain kept them awake at night.

"If ever in my life I have eaten the bread of carefulness and tasted the sweets of self-denial, it is now," wrote home one of these farmers. "I go ragged, and hungry, and cold, to keep my head above water. I wear patched boots, and look like a ruffian. I have fifty acres to seed, and behold my one yoke of oxen crawling along! See the tired driver, with dusty garments, crooked back, and the heavy, weary look of a clodhopper, urging them onward! But it is good to be independent, to ask no favors, to run after no customers or places. Wheat is cash down on delivery."

Lumber is dear and must be hauled from a distance; but houses, no matter how small or rough, must be built, and stove-pipes answer for chimneys till the latter luxury can be had. The settlers' wives realize that all practical knowledge and ingenuity can be turned to

account in a new country. They make neat rag-carpets with their own hands; they cover their rough walls with newspaper, and the little rooms are parted off with bits of chintz till wooden partitions can be afforded. If the cane-seated chairs they brought from the East give out, with their own skilful fingers they repair them. On Sunday, though no church-bell proclaims the day of rest, and rough boards laid upon nail-kegs must take the place of comfortable pews, it seems good and home-like to go to meeting. Many a couple begins this untried life with high hopes. But under the pressure of wearing toil the young wife's rosy cheeks grow hollow and her garments wax old. In a few years the larder is empty, ambition is moderated, and hope is no longer an anchor to the soul. A certain family had arrived at this pitiable stage when a stranger appeared to claim their hospitality. He had come direct from an Eastern city to spy out the land.

"Why do you allow so many weeds to grow?" he asked, pointing to the virgin prairie. "Why don't you live in a better house and dress in the fashion?" The dismayed hostess concealed the fact that she had lent her only dress to her husband the day before to wear into the field, and she also concealed the plebeian brown sugar on the table with a thin layer of white. But she forgot her fears lest this innocent ruse should be discovered, when her thoughtless guest called for baker's bread!

Now all the labor and tribulation these people undergo naturally make them sore and sensitive. But they fall into the mistake of supposing that outsiders can realize their condition, and they hardly know how to bear any criticism which savors of ridicule. Yet the first settlers can now laugh heartily over the tough experiences of the past, for from the first stage of barely living, from a depressed and almost hopeless condition of mind and

estate, they have triumphantly emerged. And now everything is dependent on the crop; if that fails, all suffer. As the seasons are short, the crop itself is dependent on the early days of spring. Small grain sown after the first of May is nothing in harvest, and this fact has been learned by nine tenths of the farmers from bitter personal experience. Each year presents the same problem to be solved, — how help can be secured to save the vast grain crop of the State. It must be cut in season or not at all, and must be harvested in two weeks from the first stroke made. The harvest truly is plenty, but laborers are few, and great inducements are held out to call them into the field. Men are offered five dollars a day, women earn from two to three, and boys ten years old are paid one dollar for driving reapers. Men often refuse, at any price, to go into the harvest-field, and sometimes the entire work on a large farm is performed by women. Our small farmers would stand

aghast at the wastefulness of their Western brethren; but where everything is done on so large a scale much grain must be lost, and there is no Ruth to glean the scattered sheaves.

Few of us realize what laborious work is done on those distant prairies in order that we may have bread to eat. A bushel of wheat weighs sixty pounds, and in one county alone in Minnesota over two million bushels must be handled. How many times this heavy grain is lifted before the farmers receive any recompense for their labor! Heavy rains come upon the prairie without any warning, and fall with a force almost unknown at the East. Happy are the farmers then if their wheat escape; for the driving rains may penetrate the stalks, and "wet wheat" means despair and the most rigid economy till another harvest. After the wheat is cut, it must be bound, set up, and hauled to stacks to save it from the weather;

then it must be threshed, and winnowed, and "bagged up," and hauled ten or twenty miles to market. The latter is not such a hardship as one might imagine; for farmers say that to ride twenty miles on a load of wheat, and home the next day on a load of lumber, is a relief and a rest.

All this labor must be performed under the burning Minnesota sun, which makes strawberries and melons grow like magic, but wilts the laborers in the field. Yet the farmers and their wives and daughters know that if the crops fail they can never improve their surroundings, or see again their old homes in the far East. So they all lend a willing hand, and when the money is in their pockets they laugh at the trouble they took to get it there. When our Western friends have leisure to think of the beautiful as well as the practical, merrymakings under the harvest-moon may enliven the dull routine of labor; and Whittier's ideal picture

of the farmer's wife may find its counterpart in many a prairie home. Then on the plains as well as among the hills the poet shall sing, —

> "Flowers spring to blossom where she walks
> The careful ways of duty;
> Our hard, stiff lines of life with her
> Are flowing curves of beauty."

The Woman Suffrage movement has not made much progress on the Minnesota prairies, and it behooves the apostles of that cause to see to it. I know an influential woman there who circulated a petition praying Congress not to allow women the right of suffrage, and she had no difficulty in getting signatures.

"You have a movement at the East called 'Women's Rights,'" said a shrewd farmer to me. "Here the women paddle their own canoes, and say nothing about it."

When we are tempted to criticise the customs and manners of our Western friends,

we forget that emigration has not destroyed their individuality or the effects of early training. The bad grammar which came from New England in spite of her schools may still be heard in Western villages; the narrow church prejudices learned in little bigoted Massachusetts towns may not yet have perceptibly broadened. But their trials, so bravely met and overcome, have made the people sturdy and self-reliant; and no one can live long on those vast prairies, under a boundless sky, without feeling that his own horizon is extending its limits, and that his views of men and things are growing broader. So it happens that the dwellers on those distant plains are often less awkward and provincial than the friends they left behind them, who are prone to think that anything is good enough for their benighted kinsfolk "out West." A certain Massachusetts religious society sent a box of books to a Western Sunday school. The recipients of the gen-

erous gift paid twelve dollars for express, preserved one book, and received one dollar for the rest, which they sold for old paper!

Persons who have spent much time at the West are apt to express great animosity against the Indians, and in those regions where Indian troubles have occurred the prevailing sentiment is one of hatred or supreme contempt and indifference. Those who know the Indians only from the mild specimens who wander about the country to sell baskets, find this feeling hard to comprehend.

"Don't you believe in 'Lo, the poor Indian'?" I ventured to ask a rough, good-natured man.

"I believe in him long enough to get the top of his head!" was the abrupt answer. "I've got two Indian scalps hanging in my bedroom, and I could n't sleep without them there."

"The Indians are wretched creatures," remarked a gentleman originally from Maine,

who stood by; "not to be compared to our Passamaquoddys or Penobscots. If they are uncommonly smart they ride about, shooting prairie-chickens and selling plums; otherwise, they live on what they can steal. I feel the same degree of emotion at seeing an Indian shot down that I should if he were a buffalo."

These views seemed very shocking and heartless at first, but I understood them better when I knew amid what scenes they had been nurtured. After the Indian massacre in Minnesota a price was set by the State government on an Indian scalp, and as I listened to the thrilling incidents of that reign of terror, I could not wonder at the exultant tone with which my Maine friend exclaimed, "They are dying out, and are just as sure to be driven from the land as the Canaanites were to be driven out before the people of Israel!"

The lives of these busy dwellers on the prairie may seem to us dreary and full of

privations, but no hardships can destroy the buoyant sense of freedom which is theirs. It gives a new zest to life, and, as a worthy farmer said, "is so innated into 'em" that they would not exchange it for all the older and more conventional East could offer.

When they come home again, the places where they once lived seem dull and tame and lifeless. Old friends are glad to see them, but they miss the cordial, free-hearted welcome of the West; and back they go to their prairie homes, with no regret that fortune has placed them there.

A PRAIRIE WEDDING.

JOSIE HALL was writing a letter by the flickering candlelight, when a knock at the cabin-door made her upset her inkstand. Her father looked up from the newspaper he was studying, which had evidently been the rounds of the settlements, and cried, "Come in!" But a frown came over his face at the sight of John Lord. Mrs. Hall kept placidly on with her knitting, and responded not very heartily to the young man's greeting.

"I guess Josie, by the way she jumped, thought the old chief had come back," said Susan, as she brought John a chair.

"Did I frighten you? What do you mean?" said John.

"O, 't was n't much," said Susan, "only that old Indian who wears a white feather fastened to his wrist came in this noon, and carried off our dinner in his blanket."

"The hungry vagabonds will eat us out of house and home yet," growled Mr. Hall.

"Don't let 's talk about them," said Josie, imploringly.

"Then, to change the subject, have you seen the fires to-night, Josie? If you will walk over to the bluff with me, I promise you a grand sight."

"Well!" The voice sounded like a delighted child's. "I 'll get my shawl." And Josie disappeared behind the chintz curtain which was hung across the room for a partition.

Mr. Hall's paper rattled impatiently.

"Susan," he exclaimed, "you have never seen the fires. Why don't you go, too?"

"Do, Miss Hall!" said John; and he beat an impatient tattoo on the back of the chair against which he was leaning.

Susan thanked him, tied on a quilted hood which almost concealed her plain face, and declared herself ready.

Mr. Hall threw his paper on the floor with a jerk as the door closed on the little party.

"Is Lord crazy, wife? Little Jose, only seventeen!" The rough voice softened at the words "little Jose," but only for an instant. "Why don't he step up to Susan?"

"Susan likes him too, I guess," Mrs. Hall said, meditatively, laying down her blue stocking and biting the end of her knitting-needle. "He 's a likely young fellow, ain't he, father?"

"Fair to middlln'," said Mr. Hall, betraying unmistakably his "down East" origin. "But he ain't so dreadful young; must be thirty, and he 's from York State. Josie must marry a Yankee."

"And Josie ought to be at school," chimed in the mother, resuming her knitting.

Then there was a long silence, broken only

by the click of the needles. A sudden thought seemed to dawn on Mr. Hall.

"Wife, you know I've got to go East in two or three weeks. Suppose I take Josie to her aunt Ruth's and leave her there to go to school? It will cost considerable to get her there, but I can sell a pair of steers."

Mrs. Hall again laid down her work and looked at her husband in surprised silence. Her ball of yarn rolled unheeded to the floor.

"Well, it may be best," she said at length; "but how we shall miss the child!"

Mr. Hall might be called a shaggy man, his unkempt hair and whiskers giving him somewhat the appearance of a huge mastiff. The prairie sun and winds had browned his skin till it was almost as swarthy as the native redman's. He wore a long blue frock and high boots. Collars, slippers, and such superfluous articles of dress were among the vanities which he had abandoned with his native State. The rough life of a pioneer suited him ex-

actly, and he enjoyed the hardships and privations which cost his comfort-loving wife many a sigh.

While the Fates, in the persons of father and mother, were thus unceremoniously disposing of Josie, the young people had reached the bluff.

"Oh! Oh!" Josie cried. But after the first surprise, she folded her hands and stood speechless. Even Susan was too much impressed to speak. Before them, a dozen miles away, the prairie fires flashed out into the darkness. On the right a wall of fire shed its sullen glare; and as if to charge this terrible wall, mad tongues of flame darted through the dry grass with lightning speed. Still beyond, the fire marched slowly, like battalions of red-coated soldiers in glittering ranks.

"Is n't it beautiful?" said Josie, after they had stood some minutes in silence. "I could watch it forever."

"Yes, it 's a mighty pretty sight," responded

Susan, "but I guess it is high time we were going home. It is getting cool."

John, who had waited eagerly for a chance to see Josie alone, felt desperate. Was he always to be thwarted?

"Stay here, Josie, till I help your sister down, for it is darker than it was awhile ago."

Susan was off her guard and consented to be handed down the little declivity. She wondered at Josie's silence on the way home.

But Josie must have been pondering over John's hurried whisper, which had brought a quick flush to her face. She heard John tell Susan how he had ruined his coat fighting fire, and how he and Ben Dole saved their granaries, but it was as if she heard voices in her sleep. Before she knew it they had reached home and John was saying good night.

Josie followed her sister into the cabin, her cheeks glowing with excitement, and her short curls rumpled by the evening breeze.

The rough farmer thought it was no wonder John Lord admired his pet; and he said to himself, "I must get her away before the mischief's done."

Susan drew a chair to the stove, and put her feet up on the hearth to warm. "What time shall I begin to churn the butter in the morning?" she said.

If any of John's old friends had seen him as he strode homeward that night, they would hardly have known the city youth of three years ago. He had been well laughed at for joining the small colony of New-Englanders in search of the Promised Land; but his old home was broken up, and he determined to try his fortune in what was then the far West. The first year the settlers shared a common home within the four walls of a roofless structure of logs. It was a strange, wild life for John. The men slept on beds made of prairie hay, and the tea they drank was made by steeping a white flower that grew on the prairie.

But the very roughness had a charm of novelty. John saw with breathless delight the startled deer bound over the prairie slopes, and the wild breezes bronzed his pale cheeks, and whistled a boisterous welcome to the freedom of the West.

When the farmers were joined by their families, and house after house went up on the prairie, John concluded to "bach it." Of late he had been thinking that the black eyes of Josie Hall would brighten his lonely cottage wonderfully. But he saw only too plainly how loath her parents would be to give up their darling.

Spring comes slowly at the great Northwest, but with what a bound at last! So thought John Lord as he stood in his cottage porch three weeks from the night we last saw him. Close by the door, through the short grass, wound an Indian trail, but the settlers had not yet learned to fear and hate their dusky neighbors. The softly rounded slopes,

so brown a month before, were green with springing grass ; the black furrows were covered with grain, while the scattered patches of woodland were bursting into leaf. Over the prairie the wild spring note of the prairie-chicken came booming, and the sweet meadow-lark flooded the fresh air with dreams of summer.

"O lovely country!" John exclaimed. "But living all alone is n't lovely," he added with a sigh.

"Why don't you go home and get a wife, then?"

John looked round and saw Ben Dole, one of his nearest neighbors, on his way to the village store.

"Do you suppose any of my fine young lady friends would come out here?" asked John, a little bitterly. "The only idea they have of the West is that it 's a vast plain covered with fever and ague."

"The sooner they get over that notion the

better," laughed Ben. "But my wife came here to meet me. George! If a woman had n't spunk enough to come to this country, I would n't marry her! I s'pose you know," continued Ben, with a sidelong look at John, "that Hall is going to take that pretty little girl of his back to the land of the Pilgrims. Susan will be left to console you"; and chuckling to himself, Ben went off.

"Susan!" John muttered, "I should poison her, or run away from her in a week. Yes, they are going to-morrow, and I shall never see my beauty again," he sadly thought.

Looking across to the bluff where he had stood that dark night with the girls, he remembered how the raging fires had prepared the way for the wild grass to spring. "Night is always darkest just before dawn," he thought; and with the prophetic words came the dawn of hope. Into his eyes came a determined look. The little striped gopher which had been frisking about now stood

erect, and looked at John with its bright bead-like eyes, as if to say "What's the matter?" But an emphatic "I'll do it!" from his lips sent the pretty creature scampering to his hole.

A few minutes later John was taking the shortest cut to Mr. Hall's, picking as he went the sweet pink roses which bloom so abundantly on the prairie. Susan went to the door when she saw him approach.

"What pretty roses, Mr. Lord!"

John drew back a little. "I should like to see your sister, if you please." Susan's countenance fell.

"She does n't wish to see you, sir," she stammered. John looked incredulous.

"When she says that, I 'll believe it," he said with a smile, but looking, as Susan afterward said, terribly in earnest.

Josie heard John's voice and came to the door, blushing like the roses which he held out to her.

"Will you go to walk with me?" he asked. "The last time, you know, Josie," he added, seeing the hesitation in her face.

"I don't think mother can spare you," interposed Susan. "There's your things to pack, and everything."

"Do you think she could spare *you*, Miss Susan?" Susan reddened at the sarcastic tone, and retreated hastily. "Come quick, or the old man will be out," whispered John. And Josie snatched her sunbonnet and obeyed.

"Now, Josie, I want you to go to the minister's house with me." And John bent over to look down into the depths of the sunbonnet.

Josie gave a sudden start and walked on in silence, nervously pulling the roses to pieces.

"You don't say no, Josie. Is it yes, then?"

"Father said it was Susan," said Josie, mischievously.

"But you knew better; and now, see here, little girl. I am all alone in the world, and I want you to come and take care of me and let me take care of you. Will you, dear?"

Josie pushed back her bonnet and looked at him in a sort of terror. "What do you mean, John?"

"This is what I mean, Josie. To-morrow you are going away. How do I know what will happen before you come back?"

"Are you crazy, John?" And Josie stopped short and looked at the youth by her side as if he were indeed bereft of reason.

"Now or never, my dear!" and John's gray eyes looked more determined than before. "I would not persuade you to any wrong, but your father would separate us forever." John's voice seemed to carry conviction with it.

The minister's wife looked curiously at the young couple as she opened the door, and then Josie realized what a strange figure she would make as a bride. For her dress was

dark calico, and on her feet — the truth must be told — she had neither shoes nor stockings! But John whispered, "Never mind, my little girl, you are as lovely in my eyes as if you were fixed up in silk and laces."

The minister was at work in his garden, and his wife hastened to call him, muttering, "As pretty a couple as ever I see." She came back with her hands full of blossoms of the pure white bloodroot which she twisted in Josie's dark hair.

Josie did not go East the next day. Her father and mother were angry at first, but they had lived long enough at the West to know how to make the best of everything. Susan swallowed her disappointment with one wry face, and in course of time married a Norwegian farmer. And the wild rose that John's daring hand had plucked filled his home and life with sweetness and beauty.

FLYAWAY.

FLYAWAY had spent all her little life, before she came to live with us, in the open air and sunshine. She had scampered about all day in the oak groves that surround the mountain farm where she was born. And though she was gentle and affectionate, she was as full of freaks and frolics as the mountain breezes.

Now, though our pet may have watched the noisy brooks rush down the hillsides, she had never seen any water so calm that it would reflect her bright little face; so she took a great fancy to the fountain on our lawn, and loved to sit on the granite edge of the lower basin and look down into the

clear water. At first we thought her very vain; but we soon found that she was only puzzled. Sometimes she was frightened at the strange face she saw looking up at her, and would start back. Or she would shyly paw the water, as if trying to touch that wonderful pussy who lived with the speckled trout and darting minnows, instead of playing about on the grass and catching flies for lunch. For didn't I tell you that Flyaway was a kitten?

One day two doves flew to the fountain and perched on the upper basin. It was a very dry summer, and birds often came a long way to dip their beaks in the running water. Sometimes a little green-and-gold humming-bird would take a sip with his long bill while on the wing. Flyaway crouched on the lawn, her eyes fixed on the beautiful doves, and her tail moving to and fro, getting ready for a spring. Meantime a brown mouse trotted quietly down the walk behind

the excited kitten. Then silly Flyaway made a leap and the doves flew away. But a sudden loud splash was heard, and a minute after Kitty scrambled out of the water, looking very wet and very much ashamed.

I dare say Flyaway caught little birds sometimes, though we tried to prevent it. But not far from our house lived a gentleman who went out with his son every morning in the early summer to shoot robins and other song-birds. Then the poor little things were broiled for breakfast. Another of our neighbors shot bright-winged birds, and gave them or their feathers to his sisters and friends to wear in their hats. And we felt so indignant with these cruel people that we could not find it in our hearts to be very hard upon poor, ignorant Flyaway.

You have seen little boys climb up on to some high step or box, just for the fun of jumping off. Well, Flyaway was very fond of running up the back stairs, and then leap-

ing from one of the chamber windows into the garden. The first time I saw her do this I thought she would kill herself, or, at least, break her leg. But no; the next moment she was looking saucily down from the branch of an elm-tree.

Once, when we were at dinner, we heard the sound of the piano. I rushed to the parlor, and saw Flyaway walking lightly over the keys, occasionally pressing one, and never making a false note.

This mischievous Puss was so lively and quick in her motions that it seemed as if she were in all places at once; and her manners were not always what one might expect from such a graceful little thing. It was of no use for the boys and girls to play croquet; for Pussy insisted on playing too, and rolled the balls where nobody could find them. When Patrick went into the garden to weed, Flyaway was there before him, and delighted to spring at the hoe and scatter the weeds

right and left. When mamma gathered flowers, the little elf snatched them out of her hands; and when the children picked currants, Flyaway was sure to startle them by jumping out of the bushes. Little Frank insisted upon it that he had seen her eat currants; which was almost too much to believe, except, indeed, of a fairy cat. For the children, who had been reading fairy-tales, "made believe" that Flyaway was no common cat, but some enchanted princess. But I fancy an unhappy princess who was condemned to live in the form of a cat would be apt to mope in a corner, instead of bubbling over with fun, like our frisky Flyaway.

One cold day I went into the hen-house, to look for eggs, and was a little startled and a good deal amused to see Pussy's wise face looking down at me from one of the highest nests. She was very fond of hiding herself behind fences and boxes, and suddenly spring-

ing out, to scare the sober old hens out of their wits. But, though she did love dearly to tease, Flyaway was yet on good terms with the forgiving hens and chickens, and it was a pretty sight to see them eating peacefully together.

One of her funniest tricks was the little game she carried on every night with the cow. When Mooly came home she always found a pile of hay in the yard ready for her to eat while she was milked. Flyaway used to bury herself in the hay before Mooly appeared. When the cow began to eat, up jumped Kitty and pulled the hay out of her mouth.

She really seemed to understand what was said, and to take an interest in all that happened. One evening the horse got entangled in his rope, and fell down in the stall, with his legs all twisted together. Patrick came running in for help; but before any one could get there Flyaway was on the

spot, examining the case with an air of great concern. But, though she was on such intimate terms with other animals, she was jealous of all cats. At the sight of a wee kitten, who once wandered into the yard, our charming Flyaway was at once transformed into a small fury; and when Frankie took the kitten in his arms the naughty cat growled so fiercely that we hastened to put the little stranger out of sight. Now Flyaway is more sedate, for she has kittens of her own. But though they inherit her love for fun, they are not so bright and interesting as their mother was, and the children never even dream of their being enchanted.

SOME LITTLE FOLKS WHO LIVE IN THE DARK.

ONE winter, when there was a great excitement among Boston boys over the fine coasting, I used to see, in a certain secluded street, a party of blind boys sliding down hill as fearlessly as if their eyes were as bright as yours, my little readers. They guided themselves partly by their acute sense of hearing, and if they sometimes ran into a fence, nobody was hurt. These boys came from Dr. Howe's School for the Blind, which Charles Dickens visited and wrote about the first time he was in this country. A great many curious strangers visit this school, for, though there are now many other such institutions, this was the

first one established in this country, and here Laura Bridgman still lives, no longer a little girl, but a middle-aged woman. Many of you have read the history of Laura, and know how Dr. Howe found her in a little village among the mountains when she was a pretty child six years old; and how he took her home, and, though she was blind and deaf and dumb, taught her to read and write and do many useful things. Laura is still bright and happy and very fond of her friends. It would amuse you to see her delight when she has a new shawl or bonnet, for she likes pretty things, though she cannot see them; and if she should take a fancy to you, she would pass her hand over your dress and feel your sleeve-buttons to know if they were like her own. Perhaps the strangest thing about Laura is her wonderfully nice touch, for she carries her eyes at her finger-ends! One day she went into the parlor and merely touched the hand of

a lady who stood there; and then she gave a joyful cry, sprang into the air, and fell fainting on the lady's neck. It was an old and dearly loved teacher, who had been absent many years in the Sandwich Islands, and had returned to this country without Laura's knowledge.

All the pupils of this school are taught simple trades, so that by and by they may be able to make their own way in the world; and some of them are much more successful in earning their bread and butter than many people who can see. One of the girls, who was very anxious to learn to play the piano, was not allowed to study music, because it was thought she had no musical talent. But she was so determined to learn that she practised in secret, and now she is one of the regular music-teachers of the school. Once an attempt was made to form a brass band among the girls, like the boys' band, but the girls were not strong enough to blow the

great instruments. They learn to cut and make their own clothes, and some of them, anxious to earn a little pocket-money, have been found making bead baskets, or crocheting mats, long after they have gone to bed. Their chief amusement is playing dominos, and one of their favorite books is "The Old Curiosity Shop," which Dickens's own generosity placed within their reach. They never weary of reading, with their nimble fingers, the story of little Nell.

Some of the children have very odd, quaint little ways. Both boys and girls take care of their own rooms, and one morning a little girl could not spread the quilt smoothly on her bed. So she took it off, rolled it into the shape of a doll, scolded, patted, and coaxed it, and trotted it on her knee; and then she unfolded the quilt, and it gave her no more trouble.

There is a dear little French boy in the school, and when he first came the other boys

made him very unhappy by telling him God would not hear his prayers if he said them in French! For blind boys are quite as mischievous as children who can see, and love to play tricks on each other. The older boys are not allowed to go to the library in the evening till the small urchins have gone to bed, for there is not room for all. One evening the big boys disobeyed this rule, and one of them, who could perfectly imitate Dr. Howe's voice and manner, ordered all his companions off to bed. They stood in great awe of the good doctor, and marched off very meekly. But when the last had gone, up stepped the Doctor himself, and laying his hand on the mimic's shoulder, said, "Very well done, my lad; now you may go, too!"

As a rule blind children are not so strong, and therefore not so lively and noisy as others; but they are much more thoughtful, and very sensitive to a sharp word. When they are alone their faces often wear a mournful

expression, and I have seen little bits of girls sit motionless, with bent heads, for many minutes at a time. They become much attached to their teachers, and in the vacations send them curious little rolls of paper through the mails. These are pricked letters, and a good many sheets of paper are required for even a short letter written in this way.

Often these children are so much petted and indulged at home that they are hard to manage. Not long ago a wild little Irish girl was brought to the school from the North End, a place in Boston where the poorest and lowest classes live, and where good men and women are holding mission schools, and trying to teach the poor people how to make their homes better and happier. At first this little waif was so rebellious that nothing could be done with her. When she was told to say her lessons she would lie down on the floor and scream; and one day, in a passion, she kicked one of her little schoolmates and hurt

her very much. But the power of love can work miracles. One day a teacher put a vase of flowers in the child's room. This delighted the little thing, who declared the flowers were beautiful. After that she privately informed one of her classmates that she "was going to be bad in every class except Miss ——'s." By and by this favorite teacher, whom Flora called "her dear mother," was taken sick, and finally had to go away. Little Flora went into her room, threw herself upon the empty bed, and cried bitterly. Then she began to think how she could please this dear absent teacher, and hearing of a sick and suffering child in a neighboring town, she sent her a doll's cap and chair made of beads. They were queer-looking little objects, for Flora has not yet learned the art of bead-work. But she is learning a more beautiful lesson, — how to forget herself and minister to others. And so, though it will take long years for Flora to outlive the in-

fluences of her early childhood, it is hoped she will grow up into a gentle, lovable woman.

The brightest scholars never want any assistance unless it is given in the same way it would be given to a person who can see; and they like to be told to *see* a thing, not *feel* it. For they dislike to be considered unfortunate, and think it almost an insult to be pitied. "I would n't give a cent to see," said one of these children not long ago; and she really meant what she said. Of course, the poor thing could not know what a world of wonder and beauty was shut out from her. And when another little girl, nine years old, was asked how she became blind, she replied: "By being brought to the light when only three weeks old; but you know we must bear these things."

Now, many "seeing children," and some of us grown-up folks, too, I am sorry to say, often feel discontented and "blue," and think

we are hardly used, without much reason. So it is good for us to know something about people who are really unfortunate, but who are yet happy and contented and full of courage.

QUAINT LETTERS FROM THE SOUTH.

SOON after the war a benevolent lady of Boston employed a young man to open a school for freedmen in the central part of East Florida. The school was held in what the negroes call a "praise-house," or meeting-house. It was a little log building, without any doors or windows; but there was an open doorway at each end, and the sunlight streamed brightly through the great spaces between the logs. On one side of the room were rough benches for seats, and on the opposite side stood the pulpit. This rude affair looked like a great box, open at the top, and had an entrance in the side, which the minister reached by a flight of steps.

The dozen urchins who assembled here the first day of the school seemed a little awed by the solemn character of the place; but this feeling soon wore off. As the fame of the new school spread abroad, pupils came flocking in from the neighboring plantations. Even men and women who had grown old in slavery were glad to study their primers with the children. Mr. Stone had taught in Northern schools; but none of his white pupils ever made such rapid progress or received instruction half so eagerly as these thirsty little creatures, — the children of the ignorant freedmen. They entered the schoolroom with as much excitement and happy anticipation as the young people of the North feel when a long-expected holiday comes.

I once asked Mr. Stone if they were never naughty or mischievous in school.

"Very rarely," he said; then he laughed, and told this little incident.

At the close of school one day, when the

roll was called, Henry Jones answered "Good." Instantly one of the girls raised her hand in protest. "What is it, Kate?"

"Henry whispered to me, sir."

"What did he say?"

"He say I sweeter than honey." And Kate hid her face in her handkerchief.

It was pleasant to watch the mirthful, happy children at their sports. A pretty grove of oak and hickory surrounded the school-house, and one of their favorite amusements was swinging in the grapevines which hung from the trees. Sometimes the girls twisted sprays of the fragrant yellow jasmine about their heads, which lent a sort of tropical grace to their dark faces and the old log-hut. Strange visitors came to inspect the little school. Often a bright-winged bird flew through the open doorway. The squirrels peeped curiously through the cracks between the logs, as if to see what their curly-headed friends were about; and once, to the consternation

of the children, a large snake appeared, but he was expelled without ceremony. Every day in the summer-time the grateful children brought their teacher presents of delicious fruit and flowers, as rare as beautiful to a Northern eye. Indeed, his little friends were so lavish of their gifts that he was often perplexed to know how to dispose of them.

Mr. Stone taught the school three years, and each time he went back from his annual visit to the North he was greeted with unbounded joy. The pleasure of the old people at his returning to teach their children was very touching. A man who rejoiced in the queer name of Joe Muttonjoy exclaimed, on one of these occasions, "I 'se right glad to see you back again, Mr. Stone. I 'se glad, glad, proud, proud! I hear heaps of people round here sayin' dey 's glad, glad, proud, proud!" And an old uncle, who was standing near, cried, with great enthusiasm,— "He is good! He is brave!"

Not less gratifying was the more quiet salutation of his old housekeeper. "Good Mr. Stone, tank de Fader an' de Sperit for bringin' you safe back."

The warm affection which these simple-hearted people felt for their teacher was quaintly expressed in their letters, received after his return to the North. Here are some extracts from these letters. The handwriting, which I cannot give, is invariably neat; the spelling is sometimes odd enough, but we must remember that when the school was started the writers of these letters did not even know the alphabet, and few of them were able to attend school regularly. The last letter, which was received only a few weeks ago, shows that though the school has long been in other hands, its first teacher is not forgotten.

"I should like to see you, kind Teacher, and hear from you. Mother say when shall you return, she say you is needed much.

When you went away it seem almost like my mother was gone away. I felt very lonesome. I have no school to go to not in the weak not in the sundays and I have not receive one letter from you. I have been looking and looking and listening and listening and trying to hear from you. Shall we meet beyond the river where the surges neer shall roll."

"Dear Teacher I was very sorry to think you has break up school. I want you to give me a presant so that I can remember you as long as I live so that if I never see you no more I hope to meet you in heaven where there shall Be no more parting forever eternal in kingdom. I am still trying to learn my books. Pleas make hast and send a person out here I want to go to school, so end the letter."

"When I think what a good teacher I had and how much I love and cannot see you it melts me into tears. I can see you face but

I cannot hear you vois. I would like to write to you once a month but I am not able to afford the paper. I have read through my Liberty three time Since you have been gone. I hope I will see your once more face before I die I want you to see if I improve any or not since you saw my writing."

"dear teacher I must tell you the truth we was mothen [more than] happy to here from you oh come again Mr. Stone. We was so happy to here from our loving teacher we all well and send thousand of love. we can never forget our loving Teacher who learn us to read and write. Your affectionate Scollar."

CORREGGIO'S "LAST ANGEL."*

FROM THE FRENCH.

BROTHER THADDEUS was once a brave officer, and served long and honorably in the Venetian army; but growing weary of a soldier's life, he found a happy home on the quiet heaths of Parma. He lived about half a league from the village of Correggio, in a sort of hermitage grotesquely constructed from the ruins of an old Roman

* Not much is known of Correggio's life; but though the art of painting may have been little esteemed and poorly rewarded at Parma, the accounts of his extreme suffering from poverty are now disbelieved. The story of the copper coin and the fatal journey furnished Olenschläger, the Danish poet, with the theme of one of his finest dramas.

camp. Our hermit was widely known and loved, for he united the skill of a physician with the charity of an apostle.

Late one night, in the summer of 1534, Brother Thaddeus heard a loud knocking at his door. In the ringing voice that once cheered his Sclavonian troops on to victory, he cried, "Who is there?"

But when a trembling, childish voice replied, "The son of Antonio Allegri," the hermit hastily rose and opened the door. The child was out of breath, his eyes were full of tears, and those he had shed in his rapid walk had been dried on his cheeks by the midnight wind.

"My father is very sick," sobbed the boy, "and mother begs you to come quickly."

The hermit seized his staff.

"Come, my child! We will throw weariness and sleep to the briers of the road."

As they hurried along the hermit asked Ludovic the cause of his father's illness.

"Ah! Brother," said the child in a strange tone for a boy of thirteen years, "my father's disease springs from an ancient trouble, — from poverty."

Thaddeus looked at the child in surprise.

"Yes," persisted Ludovic, "poverty has killed him. You know my father's toil cannot satisfy his hard-hearted creditors. Eight days ago our landlord, that wealthy Jew of Parma, for four crowns father owed him took away the painting of "Christ in the Garden of Olives." Father had worked diligently on it for six months. The same day the collector of the village made him paint portraits of himself and his wife for nothing, pretending we had not paid our taxes."

"Alas!" exclaimed the hermit, "is there no sympathy in this world for genius?"

"Some days after this," continued Ludovic, "the baker refused to trust my mother, and Bonoletta, the milkmaid, would not leave the pint of milk for my two little sisters. Mother

wept passionate tears of shame and despair, and the children wept because they were hungry. Then father said, 'If you weep, you will dishearten me, and I cannot work. The Franciscan convent owes me money, and to-morrow I will go to Parma. In the mean time, here are some crumbs of bread I have saved. Share them, and be patient till to-morrow evening.' And he took a piece of bread from the drawer of his easel. He had eaten nothing himself for two days."

"Why did not Antonio come to me?" interrupted Thaddeus.

"My father's heart is larger than his fortune, and he would blush to beg a glass of water from his best friend."

"O Antonio, Antonio!" cried the hermit, deeply moved. "But finish your sad story, Ludovic."

"Father started for Parma before dawn the next morning. He hastened to the monks

and induced them to pay him; but either from malice, or because the reverend fathers had no other coin in their coffers, they paid the two hundred crowns in copper. My father returned to Correggio on foot, under a burning sun, with this enormous burden. When he reached home he had hardly strength to say, 'We are saved!' Dropping his heavy load, he drank two large goblets of cold water to quench the thirst that devoured him. An hour after he was seized with a raging fever. A terrible crisis has come to-night, and mother sent me for you. Perhaps it is too late," added the boy, "for death comes swiftly." And reverently making the sign of the cross, he led the recluse to the chamber of the invalid.

The noble peasant, the illustrious author of so many grand works, was extended upon a miserable pallet covered with a strip of green serge. His wife and eldest son stood at the head of the bed and made with their entwined

hands a pillow for the painter, for breathing was already painful. Julia, the eldest daughter, who was celebrated at Parma for her great beauty, leaned against the bedpost, her hands crossed upon her breast; her eyes were fixed on a crucifix which hung from the wall, and she seemed to pray fervently. The little girls, Agnes and Veronica, slept peacefully in each other's arms on a bundle of straw in a corner of the room. The violence of the disease had distorted the features of the artist, and his fine face bore the marks of both physical and mental suffering. He was frightfully thin, and flames seemed to dart from his sunken eyes.

"Thaddeus," said the painter in a faint voice, "am I in danger of death?"

Thaddeus made no reply. The painter repeated his question, but was again met with silence.

"Then there is no longer any hope," he sadly cried; "and my poor children!"

"God may work a miracle," said the hermit, "but science can do naught."

"He will not save me," replied Antonio. "Does he help the feeble? The day I came from Parma I saw an innocent dove balancing itself on the branch of a sycamore; a serpent was coiled about the trunk. Lightning struck the tree, and the dove was killed; but the reptile, unharmed, fled hissing away."

"Dear Antonio, let us not seek to understand the mysteries of God. My friend, think of your soul; recall your past life, and —"

"My past life!" interrupted the dying man. "Toil and poverty have been my constant companions. I have borne humiliation and injustice without murmuring, and have never resented the insults heaped upon me. I have educated my children in the fear of God. Why, then, do you wish me to review my past life, and why should I fear the judg-

ment of him who has meted out my sufferings?"

The recluse kissed the hand of the painter. "Simple man! Sublime genius!" he cried. "Yes, you are right. The purity of your life, your active charity, will be your best advocates before the tribunal of God."

Antonio now felt that life ebbed fast. "My wife, my dear children," he said, "I must leave you. O, do not weep! I could have wished to make you happier, but the perseverance of misfortune overcame the perseverance of my brush. Ottavia and Ludovic, never abandon your mother and little sisters, who sleep there, under God's protection and yours."

At this moment little Agnes awoke with a start, and struck by the mournful scene before her eyes, the tears of her brothers and sisters, she kneeled in her crib, folded her hands, and murmured a prayer. The grace of the child, the perfect oval of her figure, framed

by the luxuriant ringlets of her golden hair, the sweetness of her face which seemed to seek in the heavens an unknown star, awoke the instincts of the artist.

"Give me my brushes, my pallet!" he cried.

"Give them to him," said Thaddeus. "The artist, as well as the warrior, longs to die on the battle-field."

They raised the sick man and made a kind of easel on his bed. The great master took his brushes, mixed his colors, and with a hand already cold with death reproduced upon the canvas, with that correctness of design, that harmony of coloring which distinguished his artistic genius, the features of the delicate child, whom he made an angel before leaving an orphan. The work ended, the painter said, "I signed my first pictures 'Antonio Allegri,' which was my father's name. Later ones I have signed 'Lieti,' my mother's name. How shall I sign this?"

"With your immortal name," said the recluse; "the name of Correggio."

Antonio then slowly wrote these words at the bottom of the canvas: "*Correggio in limine mortis pinxit, 17 August,* 1534."

Then, completely exhausted, he fell back, turned his head toward the crucifix, extended his arms to his children, and breathed his last. But the soul of the artist, before leaving its earthly abode, was revealed in the admirable sketch he had just traced. The "Last Angel of Correggio" was his farewell to earth, and one of his most brilliant titles to glory in the eyes of posterity.

The villagers of Correggio and Parma crowded to the funeral of the great artist that Italy had lost. Thus the man whose life had been crushed by adversity was called great and divine when the coffin closed over his body.

The noblemen of all the countries of Italy sent Jewish courtiers to Correggio, to purchase

the works of the illustrious painter. Advised by these secret agents and influenced by her poverty, his widow consented to make a public sale of those rich waifs of genius. When the other paintings had been disposed of, the last work of the master was put up at auction, his "Last Angel." This masterpiece was about to be struck off at the moderate sum of thirty-three ducats, when a man dressed as captain of the Sclavonian troops boldly advanced, and proudly placed his buff gauntlet upon the picture.

"In the name of Francis I.," said he, in a loud voice, "I offer twenty thousand crowns for this picture." No one dared outbid the King of France. When the Venetian captain took possession of the picture in the name of Francis, the widow and children of Correggio recognized the recluse of the Roman camp.

"You save us, Captain!" they cried.

"Not I; the King of France is your preserver. My only merit is having pointed out

to that magnanimous prince a great talent dead, and great misfortune existing."

"And where are you going?" asked Julia.

"I return," said Thaddeus, "to the Roman camp, to lay aside my uniform and resume my hermit's robe, not again to leave it till I rejoin my well-loved Correggio."

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